ROSCOE'S

NORTH WALES.



WANDERINGS AND EXCURSIONS

IN

NORTH WALES.

BY THOMAS ROSCOE, ESQ.

WITH FIFTY ENGRAVINGS,

FROM DRAWINGS

BY CATTERMOLE, COX, AND CRESWICK,

AND AN ACCURATE MAP.

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PREFACE.

EVERY age must have its prevailing fashion, and that of the present is, assuredly, pictorial embellishment in all its forms and branches. Our most distinguished living poets, and, indeed, writers of every class, seldom now appear before the world unrecommended by the genius of the painter, and the magic influence of the engraver.

In describing scenery familiar to almost every eye, how little chance has the tourist at home of winning even a passing glance without borrowing some grace from the sister arts? This intimate and still growing union—so unlike any other and so agreeable to the taste of the times—seems to derive fresh strength from trial, (the result of advantages mutually derived, and of that golden harvest not unfrequently reaped) merely by the pleasant process of both parties agreeing to benefit each other, and confer pleasure upon an enlightened public. Still, in an alliance every way so desirable, and calculated to gratify both the eye and the mind, the Author would fain enter his protest against the glory of letters being esteemed subsidiary to any other design, ranking, as it ought, first and pre-eminent in the march of intellect, as in the records of the human mind. For, without the slightest idea of challenging a controversy with his distinguished *collaborateurs*, was it not, he may ask, from the diviner thoughts of the Poet that the Painter first drew the fire and energy which emboldened him to follow, and strive to embody, those majestic creations of the muse of Homer, of Dante, and of Milton? Without these inspirations, could a Michael Angelo, a Raphael, or a Flaxman, have exhibited scenes to startle the imagination and to awaken the finest emotions of the soul?

But if, sometimes, the arts arrayed in all their strength and majesty combine to awe and surprise, (a combination happily for us not amenable to the laws) at others they are of a less imposing and more gentle character; and the artist and the author may walk arm-in-arm over the pleasant hills, by the green valleys or the sunny shores, ever ready "to catch the Cynthia of the minute," to take Nature as they find her, in her more joyous, her passionate, her solitary, and her mournful moods. *Here*, at least, their highest ambition has been to interpret her language in a simple and faithful manner. Theirs has been less a work of labour than one of love. To the Author, in particular, no task was assigned beyond that of amusing the reader by the way-side, leaving the judicious artists to speak to his eye, and his imagination, in tints bright and manifold as the rainbow.

Light and sketchy as he could make it,—drawn from no small variety of sources, antiquarian, historical, descriptive, and anecdotical—the Author's invariable aim has been, to make his book a pleasant companion, and, like a pleasant companion, to throw a charm over an idle hour—relieve the gloom of some passing moment, a solitary evening, a rainy day, the tedium, in short, incidental to every tourist's path, be he a wayfarer at home, or far away.

He has sought to convey with fidelity his impressions of the noble and picturesque scenery of our British Alps—of the spirit of improvement every where manifested by the people—of their frank bearing, and peculiar traits,—with occasional notices of the distinguished characters,—warriors, bards, ornaments of the pulpit, or of the bench,—who may have shed lustre round their native land. Most of all, he could wish to convey some idea of the delight and the advantage to be derived, so near at hand, from a ramble in spring-time or autumn, among the hills and lakes of our ancient British home.

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GLOSSARY

OF WORDS OF FREQUENT OCCURRENCE.

Ab, or *Ap*, a prefix to proper names, signifying the son of.

Aber, the fall of one water into another.

Afon, a river.

Al, power; very; most.

Allt, the side of a hill; a woody cliff.

Ar, upon; bordering upon.

Aren, a high place; an alp.

Bach, little; small.

Ban, high; lofty; tall.

Banau, eminences.

Bedd, a grave; a sepulchre.

Bettws, a station; a place between hill and vale.

Blaen, the end or extremity.

Bôd, an abode; a residence.

Bôn, the base.

Braich, an arm; a branch.

Bron, a breast; the slope of a hill.

Bryn, a mount or hill.

Bwlch, a hollow; a break; a pass.

Bychan, little.

Cad, defending.

Cader, a fortress or strong hold; a chair.

Cae, a hedge; a field.

Caer, a wall or mound for defence; a fort; a city.

Cantref, a division of a county.

Capel, a chapel or church.

Carn, a prominence; a heap.

Carnedd, a heap of stones.

Careg, a stone.

Castell, a castle; a fortress.

Cefn, the back; the upper side; a ridge,

Cil, a retreat; a back; a recess.

Clawdd, a dike; ditch; or trench.

Clogwyn, a precipice.

Côch, red.

Coed, a wood.

Cors, a bog.

Craig, a rock.

Croes, a cross.

Crug, a mound or hillock.

Cwm, a valley; a dingle.

Cymmer, a confluence.

Dê, the south.

Dinas, a city; a fortified hill.

Dôl, a meadow or ground in the bend of a river.

Drws, a door; a pass.

Dû, black.

Dwr, fluid; water.

Dyffryn, a valley.

Eglwys, a church.

Esgair, a long ridge.

Fordd, a passage; road; or way.*
Fynnon, a well or spring.

Garth, a mountain or hill that bends.
Gallt, a woody cliff.
Gelli, the grove.
Glan, a brink; a side or shore.
Glâs, blue; green; verdant.
Glyn, glen; a deep vale.
Gwaelod, a bottom.
Gwern, a watery meadow.
Gwydd, wood; woody or wild.
Gwyn, white; fair; clear.

Havod, a summer dwelling.
Hén, old.
Hendref, the old residence.

Is, lower; inferior.

Llan, a church; an enclosure.
Llech, a flat stone or flag; a smooth cliff.
Llwyd, grey; hoary; brown.
Llwyn, a wood or grove.
Llyn, a lake; a pool.
Llys, a palace; hall; or court.

Maen, a stone.
Maenor, a manor.
Maes, a field.
Mall, bad; rotten.
Mawr, great; large.
Melin, a mill.
Moel, fair; naked; a smooth mountain.
Monad, an insolated situation.
Morfa, a marsh.
Mynydd, a mountain.

Nant, a brook; river; ravine.
Newydd, new; fresh.

Pant, a hollow or ravine.
Pen, a head; top; or end.
Penmaen, the stone end.
Pentref, a village; a suburb.
Pil, that goes round.
Pistyll, a spout or cataract.
Plâs, a hall or palace.
Plwyf, a parish.
Pont, a bridge.
Porth, a gate.
Pwll, a ditch, a pit.

Rhaiadyr, a cataract.
Rhiw, an ascent.
Rhôs, a moist plain or meadow.
Rhûdd, red.
Rhyd, a ford.

Sarn, a causeway,
Swydd, a shire.

Tal, *s.* the head; the front.
Tan, spreading.
Tir, the earth; land.
Tomen, a mound.
Traeth, a sand.
Tref, or *Tre*, a house; a township.
Tri, three.
Troed, a foot.
Trwyn, a point.
Twr, a tower.
Ty, a house.
Tyddyn, a farm.
Tyn, a stretch.
Tywyn, a strand.

Uchav, highest.

Y, of; on the.
Ym, in or by.
Yn, in; at.
Ynys, an island.
Yspytty, a almshouse
Ystrad, a flat or vale.

* In some Welsh words V is sometimes used instead of F.

ROUTE OF MR. ROSCOE,

WITH SOME OF THE OBJECTS DESERVING NOTICE, AND THE TOWNS, VILLAGES, ETC., TO THE RIGHT AND LEFT.

Left.	*Route.*	*Right.*
	CHESTER.	
	Cathedral.	
	Castle.	
	Race Ground.	
	Bridge.	
	City Walls.	
	Bridge over the Dee.	
	Eaton Hall.*	
Caergwyle.		Higher King's Ferry
	Broughton.	
	HAWARDEN	King's Ferry.
	Castle.	
	Park.	
	Euloe Castle.	
	Northop.	River Dee.
	MOLD.	
	Moel Fammau.	
	Church.	

* The splendid mansion and beautiful grounds of the Marquis of Westminster are courteously open to visiters during the summer months every day, excepting Saturday and Sunday, from eleven till three o'clock.

ROUTE OF MR. ROSCOE.

Left.	*Route.*	*Right.*
Halkin Mountain.	FLINT.	
	Castle.	Parkgate, Cheshire.
	Bagillt.	
	Basingwerk Abbey.	
Race Course.	HOLYWELL.	
	The Well.	
	Downing.	
	Mostyn Hall.	The Sea.
Dymerchion.	CAERWYS.	
Vale of Clwyd.	ST. ASAPH.	
	Cathedral.	
	Pengwern.	
Abergeley.	RHUDDLAN.	
	Castle.	
	Ruins of Parlt. House.	
	Diserth.	
	RHYL.	
	Foryd.	The Sea.
	Tan yr Ogo.	
	Gwrych Castle.	
Moelfra Isa.	ABERGELEY.	
	St. George.	
	Mausoleum.	
	Kinmel Park.	
	Bodlewyddan.	
River Clwyd.	ST. ASAPH.	
	DENBIGH.	Plas Heaton.

Left.	*Route.*	*Right.*
	Gwannynog.	
Llanynnys.	Llanrhaiadr.	
Moel Fammau	RUTHIN.	Llanfwrog.
	Crown Inn, near	
	Llandegla.	Cyrn y Brain.
	Cross Offa's Dyke.	
	WREXHAM.	
	RUABON.	
	Wynnstay.	
	Park.	
	House.	
	Obelisk.	Pont y Cysilltau.
	Newbridge.	
	CHIRK.	
	Church.	
	Castle.	
	Aqueduct.	
	LLANGOLLEN.	
	Dinas Bran.	
	Bridge over the Dee.	
	Plas Newydd.	
	Valle Crucis Abbey.	
	Eliseg's Pillar.	
Berwyn Mountains.	New Inn.	River Dee.
	CORWEN.	
	Caer Drewyn.	
Llangar.	Rhug.	
	Druid Inn.	River Alwen.
	Pont y Glyn.	
[illegible]	Cerig y Druidion [illegible]	[illegible]

ROUTE OF MR. ROSCOE.

Left.	*Route.*	*Right.*
	CERNIOGE.	
Yspytty Evan.	Pentre Voelas.	
	BETTWS Y COED.	
	CAPEL CURIG.	
Trifaen Mountains.	Llyn Ogwen.	Carnedd David.
	Falls of the Ogwen.	
	Nant Frangon.	
	Ogwen Bank	
Pentir.	Slate Quarries.	Carnedd Llewely
	Bethesda.	
	BANGOR.	Menai Straits.
	Penrhyn Castle.	
	Garth Point.	
	Cathedral.	
	Plas Newydd.	
	Menai Bridge.	
	Port Dinorwic.	Plas Newydd.
		Menai Straits.
	CARNARVON.	
	Castle.	
	Town Hall.	
	Terrace.	
	View from Twt-hill.	
	Over the Ferry.	
	Newborough.	
	Maldraeth Sands.	
	Llanbeulan.	
Carnarvon Bay.	HOLYHEAD	Holyhead Bay.
	Caer Gybi.	
	Pier.	
	Harbour.	

Left.	*Route.*	*Right.*
The Sea.	South Stack Light House.	The Sea.
	Bridge.	
	BEAUMARIS.	
	Castle.	
	Baron Hill.	
	Lanvaes Friary.	
	Llangoed.	
	Puffin Island.	
	Paris Mountain.	
	Copper Mines.	
	Almwch.	
Puffin Island.	By the Ferry to Aber.	Menai Straits.
	Levan Sands.	
	Aber.	
	Rhaiadr Mawr.	
The Sea.	Penmaen Mawr.	
	CONWAY.	
	Castle.	
	Walls.	
	Bridge.	
	Old Houses.	
	Diganwy.	
	Gloddeath.	
	Llandidno.	
	Great Orme's Head.	
	Caerhyn.	Maenan Abbey.
Llyn Geirionydd.	Trefriw.	
	LLANRWST.	
	Gwidir Castle.	
		Carreg y Gwalch.

ROUTE OF MR. ROSCOE.

Left.	*Route.*	*Right.*
	BETTWS Y COED.	
	Dolwyddelan.	Moel Siabod.
	Falls of the Machno.	
	Return to Bettws.	
	Rhaiadr y Wenol.	
	CAPEL CURIG.	Carnedd David.
	Excursion through Valley of Mymbyr to Llyn Idwall and Llyn Ogwen.	
Snowdon.	LLANBERIS.	
	Waterfall.	
	Lakes.	
	Dolbadern Tower.	
	Slate Quarries.	
	Ascent of Snowdon.	
	Caunant Mawr.	
	Dolbadern Tower.	
	Snowdon.	
	Nant Gwynant.	
	BEDDGELERT.	
	Church.	
	Pont Aberglaslyn.	Moel Hebog.
	Ascent of Snowdon	
	Nantlle.	
Traeth Bach.	TREMADOC.	
	Penmorfa.	
	Clynog.	
	Nevin.	Carnarvon Bay

ROUTE OF MR. ROSCOE.

Left.	*Route.*	*Right.*
	Porthdinllyn.	
	Isle of Bardsey.	
	PWLLHELI.	
	Cricceth.	
	By Sea to Harlech.	
	HARLECH.	Rhinog Fawr.
	Tan y Bwlch.	
Moelwyn.	Maentwrog.	
	Ffestiniog.	
Arrenig.	Trawsfynydd.	
	Pistyll Cain.	
	Rhaiadr Du, at Dolymelynen.	
Nannau.	LLANELLTYD.	
	DOLGELLEY.	
	Cader Idris.	
	Nannau Park.	
	Kymmer Abbey.	
	Tal y Llyn.	
River Mawddach.	Kymmer Abbey.	
	BARMOUTH.	The Sea.
	Return to Dolgelley.	
	Cader Idris.	
	Tal y Llyn.	
	MACHYNLLETH.	Towyn.
	Mallwyd.	
Arran Mowddy.	Dinas Mowddy.	
	BALA.	Berwyn Mountains.

ROUTE OF MR. ROSCOE.

Left.	*Route.*	*Right.*
	Vale of Edeirnion.	
	Llandrillo.	
	Pistyll Rhaiadr.	
	Llanrhaiadr yn Mochnant.	
	WELSHPOOL.	
	Powis Castle.	
	Berriew.	
	MONTGOMERY.	

ON THE PRONUNCIATION

OF SOME

LETTERS IN THE WELSH LANGUAGE

C is always hard, as *k*. *Capel Curig* is pronounced *Kapple Kerrig*.

Ch is a gutteral, sounded as in the German *ich*, or the Gaelic *loch*.

Dd, whether at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, is an aspirated *d*, and has the sound of *th* in the word *weather;* thus *Bedd,* a grave, is pronounced *Beth;* and the village of Beddgelert, *Bethgelert.*

F has the sound of the English *v.*

Ff, as *f* English.

I, *ee*, as in *hid;* or, if circumflexed, like our *ee* in *been;* thus cîl is pronounced *keel.*

Ll is an aspirated *l*, and has more the sound of *chl* than *thl;* thus *Llangollen* is pronounced *Chlangochlen.*

O, as *o* in the English word *don;* or, if circumflexed, as *o* in the English word *tone.*

Ph, *eph*, an aspirated P.

R, at the beginning of a word, is always aspirated.

Th, *eth*, an aspirated T.

Y sounds like *i* in *limb*, *lime*, &c.; when circumflexed, as *ee* in *been.*

W is always sounded as *oo*, and the single *s*, as in *noose*; thus *Bettws* is pronounced *Bettouse.*

Y is, in some words, pronounced *e*, and in others as *i*, *o*, and *u*.

WANDERINGS IN NORTH WALES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

> If countries we compare,
> And estimate the blessings which they share,
> Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
> An equal portion dealt to all mankind;
> As different good, by art or nature given
> To different nations, makes their blessings even.
>
> *Goldsmith.*

Old associations, and the pleasure derived from excursions in the Principality in earlier days, and under brighter skies, were not without their influence in directing the "noiseless tenor of my way," upon returning from other and distant scenes. Ties of early friendship, warm greeting, and hospitality, with pleasant companionship, gave an additional zest to the charm of rambling through a beautiful country, combining so many features to interest the imagination and to allure the eye.

The old British birth-place of elf and fairy lore, famed alike for triumphs of the sword and prizes of the lyre—to

how many recollections did it give rise, as I beheld its most lovely and beautiful scenes still unchanged, and looked back to those "white days" so indelibly "marked in memory's tablets," with the thoughts of Beddgelert, Carnarvon, Llanrwst, Llangollen, and other spots no less socially endeared. Like the long-banished exile, from some far-off clime, catching a first glimpse of home, I seemed to renew my existence as the scenes familiar to my boyhood dawned upon me—again I breathed the freshness of my morning hours, and impressions, never to be wholly effaced, filled my mind with mournful pleasure.

Severe mental toil, like physical labour, is thought to give the truest relish to intervals of enjoyment and repose. Relaxation and pleasure were my chief objects; yet, strange to say, a strong feeling of the fleeting tenure of all human enjoyments filled my heart as I again bent my steps towards the ancient retreats of British independence. With thoughts more awake to the memorable past, and to the scenes before me, from the circumstance of my previous rambles, I recognised many a favourite spot of my summer and autumnal haunts, when I was wont to spend many days and weeks in exploring the wildest recesses of the old glens, and lakes, and hills. And where is the human being who has not had reason to contemplate, with sensations too strong for utterance, some well-remembered spot? Who has not felt himself belonging to the past, even while, by his anticipations, he has turned tremblingly to catch the shadows of the mysterious future? It is in the presence of the mouldering monuments of ages passed away—of a beloved country whose fame and splendour have vanished—of the old woods and hills no longer his own—that man can best sympathize with the transcient show and sufferings of humanity, like the vanquished Roman who sat amidst the ruins of a fallen empire and wept.

In its monumental remains and natural grandeur—with the foot of heroic nations every where upon its soil, no country presents objects of more peculiar and varied interest than Wales. The prize for contending invaders, it was long the strong-hold of genuine British valour, and maintained for upwards of twelve centuries unequal conflicts with nations far more powerful, yielding only upon agreed conditions, and the privilege of being governed by a prince born in the country. And have not the sons of British kings, ever since the last of its heroic Llewelyns, assumed the name of Wales as the proudest of their titles?

Nothing more clearly proves the importance attached to its possession than this simple historical fact. Nor does the voluminous character of the works devoted to its illustration tend to lessen the curiosity with which we retrace its annals, and call to mind its former power; or diminish the pleasure with which, at the present time, we contemplate its great natural advantages—its increasing usefulness and prosperity. No traveller enters the Principality without being surprised with evidences of its singular history; its numerous antiquities being no less striking than its splendid and romantic scenery.

Among the few real enjoyments of life, none, perhaps, surpass those open to the enlightened traveller in the deep interest excited by historical associations—in the act of comparing the present with the past, and marking the advances made by different races of people in the course of knowledge and consequent civilization and prosperity. There is, indeed, one object in such a pursuit yet more laudable and ennobling, given only to minds like Howard's to appreciate,—the godlike pleasure of travelling, not to gratify his own tastes and pleasures, but for the relief and happiness of his fellow-men.

The mere acquaintance, nevertheless, with the social condition of a nation at different periods, considered in relation to

modern discovery and improvement, and collated with the progress of its neighbours,—must always be productive of advantage; and in no way can this knowledge be so effectually acquired as by cultivating a personal communion with the distinctive features and characteristics of those nations, independent and separate in their aboriginal state, but which have at last become absorbed into one great community, subject nearly to the same laws and government. How diverse, in all leading points, the genius and temperament of the Scotch, the Irish, and the Welsh!—while all as strangely differ from the great nation with which they have gradually become incorporated.

To estimate rightly the capabilities of each,—their moral, intellectual, and physical energies, and their actual social position in connection with European civilization,—we must not only examine their existing institutions, but we must find the key of these, and their present character, in their earlier history—in their prevailing superstitions—in their heroic struggles—and in the degrees of social emancipation which have resulted from them. These it will be my business to illustrate, as the different subjects present themselves, in the course of my wanderings through the northern districts of this interesting country.



CHAPTER II.

CHESTER—HAWARDEN—FLINT.

FAIR Chester, call'd of old
Carlegion; whilst proud Rome her conquests here did hold,
Of those her legions known the faithful station then,
So stoutly held to task by those near North Wales men;
Yet by her own right name had rather called be,
As her the Britons term'd, the Fortress upon Dee,
Than vainly she would seem a miracle to stand,
Th' imaginary work of some huge giant's hand;
Which if such ever were, tradition tells not who.

Michael Drayton.

IN passing through CHESTER, the Deva of the old Britons, and the Roman "city of the Legions," too many interesting associations arise to be passed over in silence, although it is not seated within the limits of the Principality. Justly proud of its ancient loyalty, its high-born families, and the unbroken spirit exhibited in all its vicissitudes, it is still more enviable, perhaps, for the quiet of these its later days. The extensive sweep of its once formidable and castellated walls proclaims its former greatness; and, at every step, the thoughtful stranger is reminded that he beholds a "city of the past."

Rising boldly above the Dee, its singular formation and angular streets attest its Roman origin; while altars, arms,

statues, coins, and relics of battles, equally prove that it was a grand military station. As its name indeed denotes, from the Latin *Castrum or Castra*, observable also in that of some of our most considerable towns, Chester was one of the central points chosen for a great encampment of the invaders; and, having extended its dominions over the surrounding district, continued to preserve its power after its founders had withdrawn their forces. Its possession became an object of contention to the Saxons, and the more advanced portion of the ancient Britons, who had formed their strong-hold in the interior hills, where they maintained their position against every invader. It would appear to have fallen now to one and now to the other, and is known to have been the last of the strong places which submitted to the foreign yoke. As a frontier fortress, likewise, Chester was stoutly contested by the different belligerents of those stirring and unruly times, when the victor and the vanquished so often and suddenly changed places with each other. The Saxon historians have recorded their evident triumph, that their sovereign, Edwin, was rowed by six kings (probably Welch princes) on the waters of the Dee.

The modern history of Chester presents nothing remarkable, nor does it appear to have kept pace in population or prosperity with many other places. Its population in 1774 was 14,713; in 1831 it had reached 21,000. Perhaps if the Dee had been a more navigable river, Chester would have other matters to boast of than its petty manufactures and ancient fairs. The city is divided by four principal streets, named Eastgate, Northgate, Bridge, and Westgate. On a level with the warehouses is the carriage road; over the warehouses are long galleries, called *rows*,* which occupy the

* "These *rows*" says Mr. Pennant, "appear to have been the same with the ancient *vestibules*, and to have been a form of building preserved from the

space between the shops and the street; and the upper rooms being built over *the rows* affords protection to pedestrians in wet weather.

Picturesque in its appearance, the ancient edifices and curiously constructed rows give to the whole place a singularly quiet and solemn air, in striking contrast with the bustle of other cities, and blending well with its venerable aspect, and the long departed renown of its once formidable castle. Yet with the exception of the solitary specimen, called Julius Cæsar's Tower, erected by Hugh Lupus, nothing is to be seen of the ancient fortress; the old feudal structure having been destroyed in the year 1786, to make room for modern edifices of more public utility. Upon its site now appear the spacious and handsome buildings of the new county prison, the shire-hall, &c., admirably adapted to their several objects, from plans executed under the direction of the late Mr. Harrison, who succeeded in combining an appearance of exterior symmetry and magnificence with interior accommodations of the most approved and superior kind.

The principal entrance to the Shire Hall through a portico of twelve columns in double rows,—more than twenty feet high and three feet in diameter, each consisting of a single stone,—is at once elegant and imposing. The Court Room, of a half circular shape, is airy and spacious, and well lighted from above.

The County Gaol is situated at the back, on a somewhat lower level, from which the prisoners ascend by a flight of steps into the dock. Attached to the prison are several distinct yards, where the inmates can take the air and exercise at appointed intervals. There are forty rooms distinct from each other, and fourteen solitary cells set apart for the most guilty or unruly among the condemned.

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time that the city was possessed by the Romans. They were built before the doors, mid-way between the streets and the houses, and were the places where dependants waited for the coming out of their patrons."

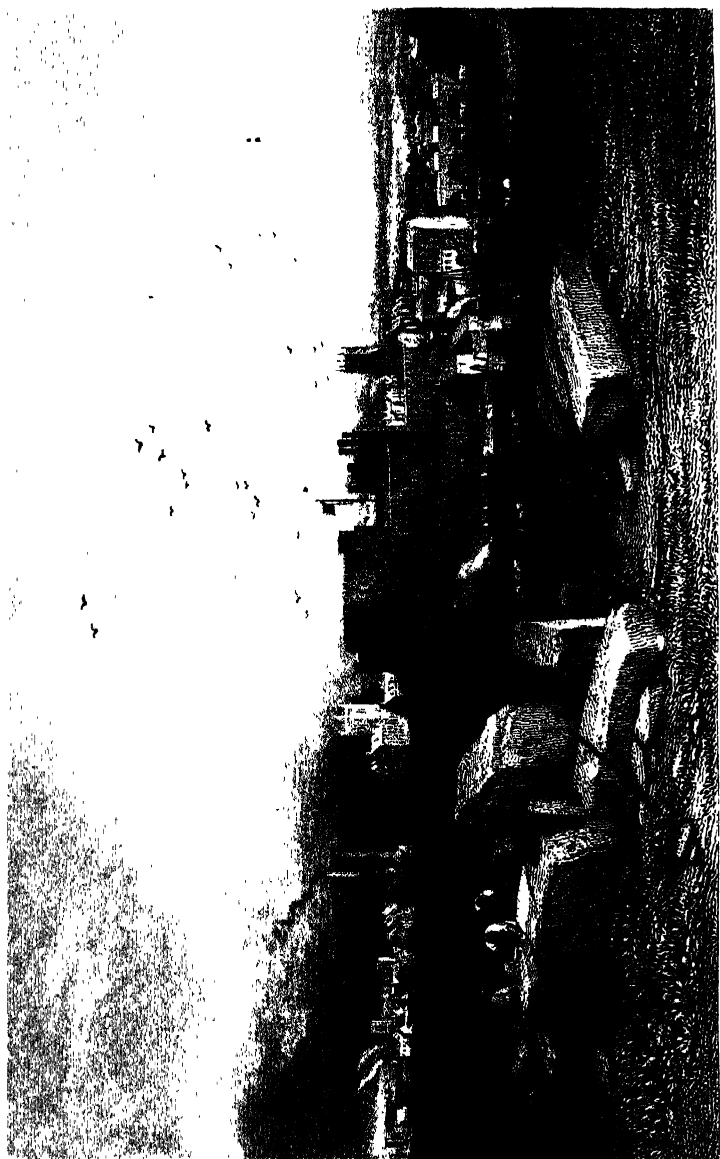
Flanking the two extremities of this pile are seen two uniform light structures, one of which forms the barracks appropriated to the use of the officers and men of the garrison, the second consisting of the armoury, where there were generally deposited not less than forty thousand stand of arms in constant readiness, besides other munitions of war.

From the noble city walls, the most perfect in Britain, embracing a circuit of two miles, the Welch mountains are seen to great advantage, mingled with a rich variety of landscape. It was from the Phœnix Tower, the only one now left on the walls, that Charles I. beheld the triumph of the Parliament in the battle of Rowton Moor. More recently the following has been carved upon it:—

KING CHARLES
STOOD ON THIS TOWER,
SEPTR. 24, 1645, AND SAW
HIS ARMY DEFEATED
ON ROWTON MOOR.

The cathedral is another of those monuments of which this once majestic city may justly boast.* It stands at the north-east part of the city, but being built of the red stone belonging to the neighbourhood, the exterior has a coarse and dilapidated appearance. The altar-piece, which is of very fine tapestry, is executed after one of the cartoons of Raphael, and represents the history of Elymas the sorceror. This work of art is said to be superior to any thing of the kind in the Vatican. The river Dee runs close to the city; over it is a bridge of recent construction, one of the finest in the kingdom, the span of the arch which clasps the river

* In a volume of Lithographic views, by Mr. I. S. Prout, published by Messrs. Boult and Catherall, are some Sketches of this venerable building, also of St. John's Church, the houses in Bridge street, and other remarkable objects of antiquity. They are very well executed, and form a volume of great interest and beauty, illustrative of this unique and curious city.



being two hundred feet, the width thirty-five feet, and the height sixty feet above the level of the water.*

The Railway Station in Brook-street, receives the trains of the Grand Junction Branch Line from Crewe, and those of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway. Passengers by this way to Liverpool are conveyed across the Mersey by steam boats. A new line of Railway from Chester to Holyhead, under the able superintendence of Captain Moorsom, as managing director, is rapidly advancing towards completion, which will afford a direct and uninterrupted connection between London and Holyhead. The English and Irish capitals may then be reciprocally reached in a few hours.

Near Chester is the magnificent seat of the Marquis of Westminster—Eaton Hall; erected from the designs of Porden, on the site of the old brick mansion, built by the celebrated Vanbrugh. The architectural elevation and the internal arrangements and decorations of this noble mansion, are in excellent keeping, and present a *tout ensemble* of exquisite grandeur and beauty. The traveller may spend a day of surpassing interest in its inspection, and amongst the rare pictures, cabinets, and other works of art which it contains. The entrance to the park, which is of great extent, is through a superb gothic building, not far from the new bridge. This gateway has recently been erected from designs by Mr. Jones, architect, of Chester, and is executed in Bath stone, after the model of St. Augustine's Gate, at Canterbury.

There are some records connected with this ancient place which, while they may appear too trifling to engage the pen of the grave historian, and standing associated with some absurdities of personal character, may be deemed unfit to be placed in the procession of national events, are yet just the

* This bridge was built by Mr. Trubshaw, of Heywood, Staffordshire, from designs made by the late Thomas Harrison, Esq.

sort of things which a painstaking traveller would gather up, not only as exhibiting the characteristic traits peculiar to the varied states of society, but as shewing that the great principles of human nature,—the household affections with their corresponding solicitudes, the grosser appetites with their strange whimsicalities, the ready native wit always in full play,—are the same in all ages.

The good people of Chester, nay, of the whole country, have been remarked by the chroniclers, Speed and Fuller, and by our old friend, Michael Drayton, the poet, for being excellent housekeepers, and "not to be parallelled in England for their hospitality." One of those quaint annalists of the times, belonging to the city, puts it down in his diary, with the most agreeable *naivetè*, as nothing very remarkable in the Chester men of those days, that, "in the year 1489, when St. Peter's steeple was pointed, a goose was eaten by the parson and others on the top thereof, and part cast into the four streets below."

Dr. Cole, a commissioner, in the time of Queen Mary, and a zealous Roman Catholic divine, was proceeding to Ireland, with a secret warrant against the Protestants of that country, and stopped one night at Chester. The mayor in his municipal character waited upon him, and he unguardedly spoke of the cruel business in which he was engaged, and took out his commission in the presence of the hostess, who had a brother, a member of that communion in Dublin. When the mayor left him, he politely attended him down stairs, and the hostess in the mean time took the important document from the box, and substituted in its place a pack of cards, with the knave of clubs placed uppermost. The doctor on his return, perfectly unconscious of what had been done, put up the box, and, on his arrival in the Irish metropolis, presented it in form at the castle, in presence of the lord deputy and the privy council, purposely assembled to examine its momentous contents. His lordship opened it, and the whole party, as well as the com-

missioner himself, were in the utmost astonishment and consternation to see the knave of clubs make his appearance amidst the solemn conclave, without any script to account for his knave's face at that unwelcome moment. Cole, burning with mortification, assured the assembly that the box *had* contained a commission, but why it was not there, and how the cards came into its place, he was as ignorant as they. Disappointed and chagrined he returned to the English court, and, being in high favour with Mary, soon obtained a fresh commission; but before he could again arrive in Ireland, the Queen died. The name of this bold and quick-witted woman was Elizabeth Edmunds, and her namesake, the good Queen Bess, when she came to the throne, hearing of this adroit stratagem, rewarded the woman with a pension of forty pounds a year for her life. To this act was owing, probably, the safety of the Protestants of the "Green Isle."

The same veritable diary, which has been before referred to, contains an entry, that in 1617 "King James visited Chester, and was presented by the body corporate with a gilt cup, and a hundred jacobins of gold, as a rich token of the attachment of the city to his crown and person." Of this expedition Mr. York relates a whimsical story. "When the King," he says, "was on the road near Chester, he was met by such numbers of the Welsh, who came out of curiosity to see him, the weather was so dry, and the roads so dusty, that he was nearly suffocated. He was completely at a loss in what manner to rid himself of them civilly; at last one of his attendants, putting his head out of the coach, said, "It is his Majesty's pleasure that those who are the best gentlemen shall ride forwards." Away scampered the Welsh as if Dio, the devil, the black robber of Cardigan, had been at their heels, and but one solitary man was left behind. "And so, Sir," says the King, who was fond of a joke, "*you* are not a gentleman, then?" "Oh,

yes, and please your Majesty, hur is as goot a shentleman as the rest, but hur ceffyl, Got help hur, is *not* so goot!"

Having bidden farewell to Chester, at an early hour, I commenced in earnest my walk, "whilst yet the blushing dawn out of the cheerful east," as the quaint Michael Drayton pleasantly calls it, "was ushering in the day," towards the elf and wizard land, passing into the Principality, near the higher King's Ferry over the Dee. It was a lovely morning, the river gradually assumed a deeper glow, as it reflected the brilliant rainbow tints of the glorious sunrise, while a soft still haze hung over its banks, tinging every object with a dewy light, till it melted in the hilly distance. I beheld not, indeed, around me the stern and majestic features of Alpine scenery—none of the varied brilliancy, the deep purple glow, and the rich mingled hues; but there was a gentleness and loveliness in the hour and the scene,—a charm in the deep peace and solitude of that morning, which left an indelible impression on my memory. It was the more vivid, perhaps, from this having been one of the earliest of my rambles when I explored the castles of North Wales,—then filled with the buoyant hopes, as now with the vanished dreams, of youth. I felt a strange delight in recalling the visions of those days, as I pursued my quiet path towards HAWARDEN, which town I reached before the inmates of the Glynne Arms—a middling kind of a way-side inn—were ready to receive visitors.

The only objects of attention at this place, are the mouldering walls of the antique castle, and the solitary glens about the park. The ruins of the castle occupy an elevated point not far from the town, and within the park of Sir S. R. Glynne. Little more than fragments of the former towers and keep remain; indeed, a considerable portion of the ruin was itself obscured by heaps of rubbish, till the late Sir John Glynne had them removed, and the foundations laid open to view. It was constructed in a pentagonal form; on one

side was a spacious gateway, and on the other a kind of barbican. At one angle was situated the keep or citadel, a circular tower still nearly entire, and which forms one of the most picturesque objects that strike the eye on first approaching "its ancient solitary reign." Other portions consist of the relics of the vast mouldering walls—of massive *donjons*,—and, in one part, of a long flight of steps, at the bottom of which was a door and a draw-bridge, crossing a ravine to another division of the castle, embracing, most probably, the prison, thus fearfully secured.

On all sides it was surrounded by deep chasms and fosses, and, from its extensive plan and broad foundations, it has the appearance of having been erected at different periods, —of having been sometimes defaced, and at others restored,—according to the vicissitudes and fortune of war.

Dating soon after the Conquest, it came into possession of Roger Fitzvalerin, a son of one of the adventurers who followed the Norman Conqueror. It was subsequently held, on the tenure of Seneschalship, by the family of Monthault, of the Earls of Chester, and finally annexed by Henry III. to the crown. After this it came into the possession of Prince Llewelyn, and was stormed by his brother David. On the subjection of the country, Hawarden was granted to the House of Salisbury, and afterwards to that of Stanley. From Thomas, Earl of Derby, it descended to his second wife Margaret, Countess of Richmond, and mother of Henry VII. In 1495, that monarch is stated to have honoured the castle with a visit, to enjoy the pleasures of the chase; but his real motive was to ingratiate himself with the Earl her husband, after the ungrateful act of executing his brother Sir William Stanley, to whose assistance he was mainly indebted for his crown. The estates continued in the family till the execution of James, Earl of Derby, in 1651; and, not long after, they were purchased by Sergeant Glynne, from the Commissioners of Sequestration.

It was at Hawarden that the ambitious Earl of Leicester, after securing the persons of the King and his son Edward, entered into that fatal league with Llewelyn, which compelled Henry to surrender the sovereignty of Wales, with the homage of its baronial suffrage, which were transferred to the Welsh Prince. In the last struggle for independence, it was surprised by David, his brother, on the night of Palm-Sunday, and the entire garrison put to the sword. This prince had acted with equal perfidy towards Edward I., his benefactor, and towards Llewelyn. Having accepted an English barony, and a seat in the House of Peers, he was condemned, like the Duke of Hamilton in later times, to die the death of a traitor, as an English subject.

The mansion of Hawarden Park, the seat of the family, is a stately structure, erected by Sir John Glynne, in 1752. In 1809 it received some magnificent additions, and then assumed the form of a castellated edifice, with antique-looking windows and turrets in the style of the thirteenth century.

The park is of considerable extent, pleasingly diversified with hill and dale, wood, water, and other accompaniments to enhance the beauty of landscape scenery, the whole backed by the high range of hills which divides Flintshire from Denbighshire. The cawing of the rooks—the stateliness of the trees—the extreme verdure and softness of the grass—the ivy-grown ruins—and the rippling of the stream present a series of interesting objects to the eye, and excite a correspondent succession of pleasurable sensations in the heart of the traveller, as he pursues his walk over these grounds

The last fleecy clouds passed from the horizon before the splendour of a glowing noon, as I, on the following day, commenced my walk towards the lonely and wooded retreats of Euloe. Though scarcely more than a quarter of a mile from the main road, so secluded is the spot that a guide is usually engaged to thread the paths leading to its time-worn

and romantic castle.* The fortress stood on the edge of a glen, whose acclivous sides were clothed with a dense forest. In old Leland's time it was described as a "ruinous castelet or pile," but now only the fragments of a massy tower and broad dilapidated walls, consisting of a sort of hornwork, present themselves to the eye. At one end of an ancient oblong court, overgrown with weeds and mosses, stands the ivy-mantled porch and turrets—lone and neglected as the scene, and forcibly corresponding with the description in Gray's Elegy;—the deserted abbey and the modern hamlet, with its rustic church in the distance, giving all the feeling of truth to the touching reflections of the poet. The sighing of the wind through the deep ravine below the tower alone interrupts the solemn silence that broods around; and on the other side of the ruins appears the broad, deep moat, where the old drawbridge once stood. From the summit of the tower the traveller beholds, over thickly wooded vales and glens, a wildly picturesque prospect, which cannot fail to impress him with an idea of solitude almost as profound as if he had stood amidst the spreading forests and rivers of the new world.

The low, narrow defiles of Coed Euloe, and the vicinity, became memorable by the defeat of Henry II., when commanding in person, during one of his most formidable invasions of Wales. The sons of Owen Gwynedd permitted the enemy to approach along the passes of the country, till they were gradually entangled in the obscurity of the surrounding woods, and narrow glens and valleys. The onslaught was terriffic; their enemies were thrown into confusion, and pursued with slaughter into the heart of the English camp.

* Euloe Castle is situated to the right of the Mail road leading towards Bangor, the path branching off about half a mile beyond the intersection of the road from the King's Ferry to Mold.

It would seem that there is no tradition extant respecting the foundation of Euloe Castle, its origin having defied the research of even that patriarch of tourists, Mr. Pennant. But there is sufficient reason to conclude that it was built by one of the lords of Tegangle, or by Henry himself, as a strong-hold to protect his troops from future disasters like those already mentioned.

Having indulged my curiosity in exploring the relics of feudal power and splendour,—enjoyed the picturesque views, the melancholy charm of this wild, secluded spot, I prepared to revisit the still more memorable Castle of Flint.

Continuing along the highway as far as Northop, a village eleven miles from Chester, the road is reached which connects the towns of Flint and Mold. The latter place is three miles to the left, in the pleasant valley watered by the Alyn, backed by the long range of hills which divides the counties of Flint and Denbigh, beyond which the dark towering Moel Fammau rears its peak. On this point was erected in 1810 a column one hundred and fifty feet in height, to commemorate the jubilee in the reign of King George III. From hence the high lands of Cumberland, Derbyshire, Shropshire, and Carnarvonshire, are visible in clear weather.

Mold, or as it is called in Welsh, Yr Yyddgrug,—the conspicuous barrow,—from a mount which stands at the north end of the town, is a populous and flourishing place, surrounded by many lead and coal mines. The church, which is dedicated to St. Mary, has considerable attractions in the elaborate carving on the top walls of the building, and in the light and elegant clustered pillars that adorn the interior, having between the arches angel-figures, bearing shields ornamented with religious and heraldic devices. There are some monuments also in the church that would detain for a while the curious and the antiquary. From the churchyard may be seen Bailey Hill, where once stood the old fortress, scarcely a vestige of which now remains. About a mile west of Mold,

is Maes Garmon,—the Field of Germanus,—where the Britons, headed by the two bishops, Germanus and Lupus, gained a complete victory over the Picts and Scots, in the Easter week of 448. Before the threatening hosts joined in conflict, Germanus rode along the ranks, and instructed the soldiers to attend to the word given by the priests, and to raise with uplifted voices that battle-cry throughout the whole army. Germanus pronounced the word *Alleluia!* The priests repeated it thrice, the eager host took up the sound, and shouted it forth in triumph. The neighbouring hills sent back the *alleluia* as the Britons charged upon their northern foes. The enemy were thunder-struck, and fled in affright on all sides. The victorious army hotly pursued the flying rout, and but few escaped their vindictive swords to tell the dismal story of the overthrow. A pillar marks the spot, erected in 1736 by Nehemiah Griffiths, Esq.

It is these concomitants of history that give such a lively interest even to the tamest scenes of nature. The intelligent traveller as he stands on the Field of Garmon will not fail to recall to his mind that fearful onslaught of armed men, the terrible cries of the stricken and flying foe, and the *alleluias* that issued from a thousand living lips, and were reverberated by the senseless rocks. Nay, the remembrance will be even more vivid by the contrast which presents itself,—in the level green sward scarcely pressed by the foot of a solitary wanderer, or the ploughman's gleesome whistle, as he drives his share over the lea, or the busy harvest-men as they shout their song of joy and peace, while carrying from the field their last load of the season's treasures.

The town of FLINT—or Colsul, or Coleshill, as it was anciently called—has all the appearance of a fallen and deserted capital, presenting evidences of its former extent and importance in long lines of half dilapidated edifices and broken streets; and in its rapid decline it seems to have partaken of the fate of its once-towering and lordly fortress. Its loss of

influence was accelerated by the removal of the general sessions, and the competition of powerful rivals: and though at the head of one of the ancient shires of North Wales, there seems little promise of its restoration to vanished greatness or civic prosperity. From the situation of the place, it has every appearance of having owed its origin to fierce and perilous times,—its entire structure presenting the aspect of a warlike station to resist the repeated shocks of a people newly subdued. The primitive foundation was doubtless that of a Roman encampment, the site being rectangular, and having a deep wide fosse, with huge ramparts, besides four great equilateral gates, which can be traced upon the same military foundation. The town is situated upon the banks of the navigable estuary of the Dee, nearly opposite to Parkgate, in Cheshire, between which place and Flint, ferry boats ply daily, forming a communication with Liverpool. Although the county jail is here, where prisoners are confined, yet the recent prosperity of the neighbouring town of Mold has occasioned the removal of the assizes to that town.

The imposing ruins of the Castle are seen on the north-east of the town, and stand in bold relief upon a rock jutting from the south bank into the sands, which are washed by the sea at spring tides. It is built in a square, with large round towers at three of the corners, with a fourth a little disjoined and still more massy. This last is known by the name of the double tower, and was connected with the main edifice by a drawbridge. Beneath it is a circular gallery, with four arched openings into a central area more than twenty-two feet in diameter. In one part, this gallery slopes towards the interior, and, again ascending, communicates with an upper range still more central, which formed the ancient donjon.* To this strong-hold, we are informed by Froissart, the unfortunate Richard II. retreated, as a place of the greatest security;

* Pennant.

and here he was subsequently delivered into the hands of Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster,—an event which, it will be seen, has afforded scope for the genius of an artist familiar with the historical characteristics of "olden times."

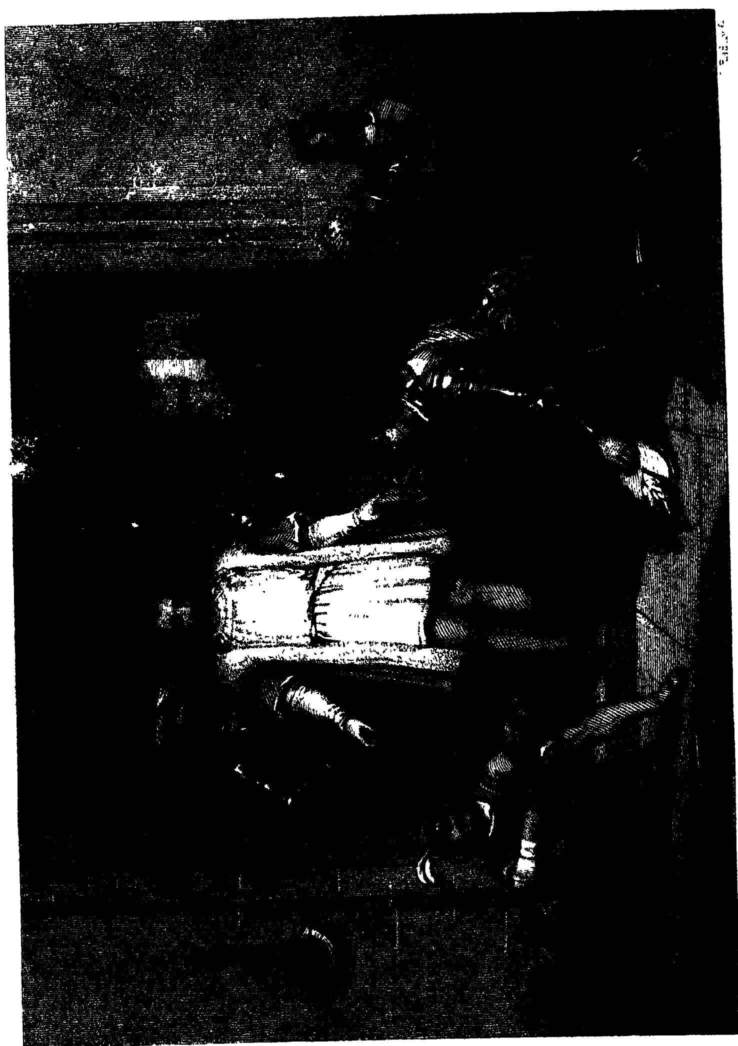
The scene between Richard and his haughty kinsman is perhaps one of the most remarkable and pathetic in the range of British history, and throws around these ruined precincts a still sterner air of melancholy interest and truth.

On the attainder of Vere, Earl of Oxford, Flint Castle came into possession of the Earl of Northumberland, who had the baseness, under the mask of a peace-maker, to entrap the sovereign whom he professed to serve into the hands of his enemy and aspiring rival. As if anxious to effect a reconciliation between the king and the duke, by means of a personal interview, he appeared before Richard in the character of a loyal mediator, declaring that all his kinsman aimed at was the privilege of holding a free Parliament, and having his estates restored to him. Deceived by his loyal professions, and weakly relying upon the honour of an English peer, he was prevailed upon to give his betrayer a meeting in the neighbourhood of Cornway. The better to allay the king's suspicions, which were more than once expressed, he proposed to accompany him to high mass, and renew his oath of allegiance at the altar. The way from the holy temple lay through a lonely defile in the mountain district near Penmaen Rhos; and here the king was first taught to repent of having placed confidence in the solemn oath of one of the first nobles of the land. They were soon joined by a numerous military escort, bearing the arms of the Earls Percy on their standards. Upon the instant, Richard, who was never wanting to himself in moments of emergency, turned his horse's head to fly, but it was too late; the arch-traitor himself, dashing forward, seized the reins of his charger, and, seconded by his partizans, forcibly directed his wretched sovereign's route towards the then broad, frowning towers of Flint.

Bitterly did the royal Richard reproach the dastardly be-

trayer of his sovereign's trust, accusing him, to his face, of the vilest treachery that ever stained the arms of an English knight, and appealing to the God, in whose presence he had that morning sworn fealty, to visit its blasphemous violation upon his head, declaring a day of retribution would assuredly follow a deed so revolting to every mind. But his betrayer only hurried forward more speedily till he reached Rhuddlan; and, after a brief pause, hastened onward, with the conscious guilt of a retreating bandit, eager to deposit his stolen treasure, ere he could be overtaken, in the impregnable walls of Flint. Having secured the price of royal blood, he added the most despicable hypocrisy to treachery and insult. Both he and his employer affected to treat Richard with the utmost deference and respect. "The next day after dinner," says our pleasant old Chronicler,* "the Duke of Lancaster entered the castle, armed at all points, his basinet excepted. Kynge Richard came down from the keep, or *donjon*, to meet him, when Bolingbroke fell upon his knees with his cap in his hand Seeing this act of apparent submission, the Kynge took off his hoode and spake first, 'Fair cousin of Lancaster, you are right welcome home.'—The duke, bending still more courteously, replied, 'My Liege, I am come before you sent for me, the reason why I will shew you. The common fame among your people is such, that ye have for the space of twenty or two and twenty years ruled them very rigorously; but, if it *please* our Lorde, I will help you to govern better.' —Then the kynge answered, 'Fair cousin of Lancaster, since it pleaseth you, it pleaseth me well.'"—Stowe also informs us that "Kynge Richard had a grayhounde called *Mathe*, who always waited upon the kynge, and would knowe no one else; for whensoever the kynge did ryde, he that kepte the grayhounde did let him lose, he wolde streyght rune to the kynge and fawne upon him, and leape with his fore-feet upon the

* Stowe's Annals, p. 321.



kynge's shoulders. And, as the kynge and the Earle of Derby talked togyder in the courte, the grayhounde, who was wont to leape upon the kynge, left the kynge, and came to the Earle of Derby, Duke of Lancaster, and made to him the same friendly continuance and chere as he was wont to do to the kynge. The duke, who knew not the grayhounde, demanded of the kynge what the dog would do? 'Cosyn,' quod the kynge, 'it is a great good token to you, and an evyll sygne to me.'—'Sir, how know you that?' quod the duke. 'I know it well,' quod the kynge, 'the grayhounde maketh you chere this day as Kynge of Englande, as ye shall be, and I shall be deposed: the grayhounde hath this knowledge naturalye, therefore, take him to you; he will folowe you and forsake me.' The duke understood well those words, and cherished the grayhounde, who wolde never after folowe Kynge Richard, but folowed the Duke of Lancaster."

Soon, however, this hollow show of respect was thrown aside, and dropping the mask, with a high, sharp voice, ordered forth the king's horses; and then "two little nagges, not worth forty franks, were brought out; the king was set on the one, and the Earl of Salisbury on the other; and thus the duke brought the king from Flint to Chester, where he was delivered to the sons of the Duke of Gloucester and of the Earl of Arundel, whose fathers he had recently put to death. They conducted him straight to the prison, and in this 'dolorous castelle,' as it is termed by Hall, was deposed the weak and unfortunate monarch, Richard II."

It would appear, as in the case so pathetically alluded to in *King Lear*, that even the ingratitude of the brute creation added a sting to the broken spirit of the crownless monarch. Such an incident could not escape the artist, studious of historical character in the old picturesque times; and Richard's favourite dog here appears as if struck with

the change in his master's demeanour, and, sensible of his fallen fortunes, eager to fawn upon his rival; while Richard's page is attempting, with strong natural delicacy, to repress the dog's efforts to fawn upon the proud usurper.

After an interview like the foregoing, the speedy fate of Richard,—the invariable fortune of a captive and dethroned prince,—calls for no comment. In its most trying circumstances,—such as the heartless parade of his victim through the country in his progress to the capital,—how well does the exquisite description of our immortal dramatist exhibit the startling scene, and all the traces of Bolingbroke's character! With what peculiar felicity he holds to view the noble moral —a fearful lesson to princes,—of the transient state of human greatness, and the still more transient nature of human favour.

"Men's eyes
Did scowl on Richard: no man cried—God save him!
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head;
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,—
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience,—
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
And barbarism itself have pitied him."

With regard to the foundation of Flint Castle, antiquarians are to this day undecided. Camden and others, followed by Lord Littelton, assert that it was commenced by Henry II. and completed by the first Edward; while Leland adduces the authority of older writers to attribute it altogether to the latter. After his rout and escape from Euloe, it is probable that Henry erected some fortress on the spot to resist any fresh attacks, and that the more enlarged castellated pile, in its strength and majesty, was the work of his great descendant, the most powerful of English sovereigns. In 1277, an order was issued for proclaiming a market and fair, to be held at

Flint—a measure soon after extended throughout Cheshire and the cantreds of Wales. From the tenor of a writ, preserved by Rymer, it would also appear that Edward I. resided in the castle, the same year, about the period of the Feast of the Assumption.

In 1280, the year in which it was garrisoned, another mandate was issued for the custody of the gate of Flint. Three years afterwards the town received its first charter, was made a free borough, and a mayor elected and sworn "faithfully to maintain its liberties."

Wearied with the oppressions of successive masters, the Welsh at length rose once more, led by Llewelyn and his brother David; and Flint, like Hawarden, was surprised and carried by storm. It was here too, in 1311, that the first English Prince of Wales—Edward of Carnarvon, the son of the Conqueror—received from exile his favourite, Piers Gaveston, who had landed from Ireland, and by his infatuated weakness suffered a fate still more terrible than that inflicted by his father on the last native princes of the country.

In 1355 Edward, the Black Prince, received orders, as Earl of Chester, to take into safe custody the castles of Flint and Rhuddlan, which he possessed by charter, in common with that of Chester, and the cantred and lands of Englefield.

In the formidable insurrection of Owen Glendower, that able chieftain in vain attempted to possess himself of the fortress, from which time a blank occurs in its history, till we reach the period of the Civil Wars. It was then garrisoned for the king by Sir Roger Mostyn, of whom Whitelock makes the following honourable mention:—"This Colonel Mostyn is my sister's son, a gentleman of good parts and metal; of a very ancient family, large possessions, and great interest in the country, so that in twelve hours he raised fifteen hundred men for the king." In the siege of 1643, he made a desperate defence against the Parliamentary general, Sir W. Brereton, and it was not till every method was

exhausted, and every privation suffered, that he yielded, in order to preserve the garrison. The castle appears to have been subsequently recovered by the royalists, as the garrison of Beeston had by articles of convention marched out of that fortress, in 1645, with all the honours of war, "to join their countrymen in Flint Castle." But it was again compelled to yield to General Mytton, in 1646, and in the year following was dismantled, with many other fortresses, by order of the Parliament. Its gallant governor was ill-requited by the Crown for his services; for, after having expended upwards of sixty thousand pounds, and suffered a long imprisonment in Conway Castle, he was so reduced as to leave his family seat, and live privately at an ordinary farm-house.

At the Restoration the Castle of Flint was resumed by, and is still vested in, the Crown; and, according to the tenor of ancient royal grants, the constable appointed appears in the two-fold character of military and municipal head—being at once Governor of the fortress and Mayor of the borough.



CHAPTER III.

HOLYWELL—ST. ASAPH—RHUDDLAN—RHYL—ABERGELY.

THE morning air
Plays on my cheek how gently, flinging round
A silvery gleam; and now the purple mists
Rise like a curtain; now the sun looks out,
Filling, o'erflowing with his glorious light,
This noble amphitheatre of hills.

Rogers's Italy.

THERE are moods of mind—the result, perhaps, of too deep experience or long travel, such as dictated some of the wildest and most pathetic poetry of Byron—when the beaten tracks of life, society, the hollow forms of friendship, and the yet hollower promises of ambition, seem to lose their every charm. The thoughts of the heart revert, with a sigh of regret, to earlier and more genuine affections, more unembittered pursuits; or, charged with deep emotions, press forward to the future where all is real, substantial, and sincere. We sigh to cast off the worldly mask which custom condemns us to wear —to turn from the empty forms and heartlessness which direct the grand movements, and perform the lip-service of the day, and to shelter us in the sanctuary of younger and nobler feelings—feelings more assimilated to our first love, when we worshipped the bright effusions of genius as holy

truth, and dwelt on the beautiful and glorious in nature with the affection of a child on its smiling mother's face.

With this irrepressible love, so early rooted—with habits of deep solitary study and contemplation, which strongly marked his character and feelings, and with that restlessness, which an early unhappy passion, treacherous friendship, and wounded ambition, equally produce,—the Wanderer turned from the resorts of the great and the gay with a feeling of scorn and satiety, which seemed to render change of scene almost necessary to his being. He had studied life—as it is idly termed—under different aspects, and in all its conditions; he had beheld society in its equally vulgar extremes; he had experienced the strange mutabilities of fortune, and he now wandered a solitary amidst scenes over which fancy, ennobling love, and youthful companionship, had cast the spell of their brief, but glorious reign.

The ruins of the time-dismantled castle of Flint, which threw its broad shadow upon the sands, like the reflection of those vanished scenes, assorted well with the traveller's mood, as he resumed his onward path. Within the precincts of those mouldering battlements monarchs had met,—there a monarch laid down his crown; they had rung with the storms of battle, and re-echoed with the wildest revelry of feudal victory and pride. A brave people had there surrendered up their ancient freedom at the feet of the oppressor, little regardful of the blessings which such a conquest had in store for them; and with thoughts strangely speculating on the results of human action, and the great compensatory system of mingled good and evil, the traveller gazed back upon what were once the massive bulwarks of Flint, fast crumbling into dust. He listened to the growing swell of those eternal surges which came sweeping over the sands, when the bulwarks were in their glory; and the sun shed a brilliant glow over the far-spreading shores of the Dee, as he pursued the path along its banks towards the ancient Abbey of Basingwerk. Free

as the native mountaineer to select his own time and route, without the breath of another's will, he felt the sense of loneliness lost in the "strong and far delight" of exploring at pleasure scenes and spots congenial with the prevailing impulses of the hour. It was this feeling which induced him, on reaching the Principality once more,—a sadder but a wiser man,—to throw off all ties and incumbrances of the way, and taking the cross-roads and bye-paths, to resume acquaintance with the dwellers by the lake and hill-side, with some of whom, humouring their national foible, he often loved to descant on princely lineage, and the respective merit of their titles to rank with the common or the royal tribes. By this plan he enjoyed the best of all companionship, which he could drop or take up at any moment; gleaned many amusing particulars as to antiquarian games and sports, the old laws of assemblies and festivals, with the more traditional customs and manners of country life. In his progress to Euloe he thus visited every spot, along the high-ways and bye-ways, which could excite his curiosity, or win him by the study of simple habits and reliance on personal exertion and resources, to free himself from the real servility of irksome dependence upon menials for his least wants and wishes. The advantages he derived were as pleasant as they were unexpected; he experienced in the counties* of Denbigh, Carnarvon, and Merioneth, the delightful confidence inspired by traversing the less frequented portions of the country; he beheld their wild, picturesque scenery in their most contrasted lights and shadows—in cloud, in sunshine, or in storm—in the silence and the deepening hues of twilight—the opening splendours of the dawn, and under the solemn sway of night.

No spot in the neighbourhood could be better selected for the site of an Abbey than the one chosen for that of Basingwerk, the ruins of which rest upon a gentle eminence between two hills, about a mile east of Holywell, among rich meadows, near the spot where the waters of that wonder-working

well fall into the Dee, commanding a fine view of the Cheshire shore, with a profusion of spreading sycamores and groves of ancient trees on all sides. It is supposed to have derived its origin from one of the Welsh princes, but the fragments which the Wanderer contemplated belonged to an institution founded, probably, by the Earl of Chester, in 1113, the foundation afterwards being confirmed by King Henry II, and Prince Llewelyn. In its time-worn and crumbling ruins, hardly any idea can be formed of its original extent or character; but it is proved to be of that mixed architecture, Norman and Early English, by its present remains, and by the traces of its foundation. After being built, it received considerable additions at various times;—the refectory, now used as a stall for cattle, with its long range of circular pillars and trefoil arches sunk in the wall, deserves particular attention. It is worth while to visit Basingwerk, though only "the shade of what it was," were it but to admire the taste which these hermits of old had in fixing their residence, and the piety, it may be, which led them to seek a solitary abode so favourable to devotion.

"O thou, who to this wild retreat
Shall lead, by choice, thy pilgrim feet,
To trace the dark wood, waving o'er
This rocky cell and sainted floor;
If here thou bring a gentle mind,
That shuns by fits, yet loves mankind,
That leaves the schools, and in this wood
Learns the best science—to be good;
Then soft, as on the dews below
Yon oaks their silent umbrage throw;
Peace, to thy prayers, by virtue brought,
Pilgrim, shall bless thy hallow'd thought."

At a short distance from the Abbey formerly stood Basingwerk Castle, now, however, reduced to a heap of ruins, hardly distinguishable. Vestiges of the fortress appear on the edge of a vast ditch, called Watt's Dyke, which protected it on the south, while the west was secured by a deep gully,

formed by the river. The original building was of great antiquity, too remote for any authentic records, the later one having been built in 1157, by Henry II., after his escape from Euloe. It was taken by storm by Owen Gwynedd, and has not since been repaired.

HOLYWELL! who has not heard of HOLYWELL and its miracle of a spring! Who has not had his youthful heart stirred within him at the wonderful story of the chaste and beautiful St. Winifred, and her recovered head But the Holywell of former days, the place for pilgrims and penitents, is no longer what it was, but has become a bustling manufacturing town, more estimated for its mines, mills, and machinery, than for the waters of its far-famed well. The town still, as it formerly did, crowns the brow of an eminence, which slopes down to the shores of the Dee. The stream, which issues from this celebrated spring, and which, in early times, carried its healing waters in murmurs that spoke of "promised pleasure" to the gazing sufferers, having upon its banks one solitary mill to supply the hospitable brotherhood of Basingwerk with the fine flour of their delicate simmels,* now absolutely roars with the sound of battering hammers and battered anvils, used in the conversion of the ores and metals raised in different parts of Flintshire and Denbighshire, and in fabricating them into copper sheets and copper bolts, rolls of wire, and articles and vessels of all kinds for use and ornament.†

The church, dedicated to St. Winifred, is a spacious building, with the east window ornamented with stained glass; it is situated at the foot of a steep hummock, below the upper part of the town.

St Winifred's Well, which gave the name of HOLYWELL

* A most agreeable bun, or cake, of which the good fathers of those days are reputed to have been very fond.

† For an interesting account of these mines and manufactories, the reader is referred to Aikin's Mineralogical Tour through North Wales.

to the place, is a powerful spring, throwing up about thirty tons of water per minute, with scarcely any variation in rain or drought, in winter or summer. The whole of this structure as it now stands, together with the chapel above, was built by Margaret, mother of Henry VII; the style partaking of the character of that era, though Mr. Grose is of opinion that portions of it are of much earlier date. The interior work is most beautifully executed and presents a fine specimen of enriched groining, with carved pendants illustrative of its legend, and sculptures alluding to the house of Stanley, forming a canopy over the well; from whence the water passes under an arch into a large basin, in which the artist of the accompanying engraving has introduced several characteristic figures in the act of immersion—no doubt intended to represent the infirm and holy pilgrims of bye-gone days. It would speak favourably to their taste if the well, basin, and building were kept in a more careful and cleanly condition, by the good people of the town; but the said good people in their justification affirm, that its comparatively neglected state is attributable to the proprietorship being disputed by the Marquis of Westminster and the authorities of Holywell.

The legend of the well is this:—Winifred, who is supposed to have lived in the early part of the seventh century, is reported to have been a beautiful and devout virgin, of noble descent. She was placed under the protection of her ralation Beuno, a descendant from the kings of Powys, who had founded a church here. A young Prince of the name of Caradoc, the son of King Allen, struck with the elegance of her person, resolved to attempt her virtue; and, seizing an opportunity when all except herself were at prayers, he declared to her his passion. She made some excuse to escape from the room, and then fled from the house to the church, which stood at the foot of the hill. Before she could reach this sanctuary he overtook her, and with his sword, in an

ecstasy of rage and disappointment, struck off her head. This, like an elastic ball, bounded down the side of the hill, through the door of the church, and up one of the aisles directly to the altar where her friends were assembled at prayer: resting here, a clear and copious fountain immediately gushed out. St. Beuno snatched up the head, and again joining it to the body, it was, to the surprise and admiration of all present, immediately re-united, the place of separation being only marked by a white line encircling the neck. Caradoc dropped down on the spot where he had committed the atrocious act; and the legend informs us that it was not known whether the earth opened to receive his impious corpse, or whether his master, the devil, carried it off, but that it was certainly never seen afterwards. The sides of the well were covered with a sweet-scented moss, and the stones at the bottom became tinctured with her blood! The poetical antiquary, Michael Drayton, whose descriptions are always true, and sometimes beautiful, has versified this event.

> "The lifeless tears she shed into a fountaine turne,
> And, that for her alone the water should not mourne,
> The pure vermillion blood that issued from her veines
> Unto this very day the pearly gravel staines,
> As erst the white and red where mixed in her cheeke;
> And that one part of her might be the other like,
> Her haire was turned to mosse, whose sweetness doth declare
> In liveliness of youth the natural sweets she bare."

Winifred survived her decapitation about fifteen years, and having, towards the latter end of that time, received the veil from St. Elerius at Gwytherin, in Denbighshire, died abbess of that monastery. There her body rested in quiet for near *five hundred years*, till the reign of King Stephen, when a miracle having been wrought, by her intercession, on a monk at Shrewsbury, the abbot of the convent there determinded on a translation of her remains to their monastery which, after much difficulty, and many pretended visions from heaven, was at last effected about the year 1138.

The well, after her death, was endowed with many miraculous properties: it healed the diseases of all who plunged into its water, and Drayton says that no animal whatever could be drowned in it.

The sweet scented moss, growing plentifully on the sides of this well, is the *jungermannia asplenoides* of Linnæus; found in many other springs in the kingdom, and is also occasionally to be met with in moist places, by road sides, and in woods. The blood-tincture is from another vegetable production, the *byssus jolithus*.

The devotees of the saint were formerly very numerous, and in the last age the well was so noted, that, according to Mr. Pennant, a crowned head dignified the place with a visit. "The prince who lost three kingdoms for a mass, paid his respects on the 29th of August, 1686, to our saint, and received as a reward a present of the very garment in which his great grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, lost her head."

The return of St. Winifred's day was at one time regularly commemorated by the devout members of the "ancient faith" of this part of the country. But this festival declined in proportion as the legend became doubted, and then disbelieved, by the people. The last occasion of its celebration, probably, was in 1718, when a solemn procession took place to the shrine of the maiden saint; but the Government having had notice of it, and suspecting, causelessly indeed, some covert design of the disaffected, sent down a party of dragoons who violently seized the officiating priest, and forcibly took possession of the images, plate, and sacred utensils that were used in the ceremony.

The caustic Fuller, whose acrid humour always overflows when he touches the saints of the Roman Kalendar, remarks upon the legend of St. Winifred, "that if the tip of his tongue who first told, and the top of his fingers who first wrote, this damnable lie, had been cut off, and they had both



been sent to attend their cure at the shrine of St. Beuno, they would certainly have been more wary afterwards how they reported or recorded such improbable untruths."

The Wanderer's diversion from the old prescribed routes and line of roads, brought him acquainted with a number of interesting objects—pleasant little hamlets—antique mansion houses—feudal and castellated ruins, which could not otherwise have been explored. It was thus that he reached Downing, formerly the seat of Thomas Pennant, Esq.,* the celebrated tourist and topographical and antiquarian historian of Wales. This structure is erected in the form of a Roman H, a style of architecture common in Wales in the seventeenth century, and bore this ancient motto on the front in the native language:—"Without God there is nothing: with God enough." It is seated amidst a dark cluster of trees, about three miles north of Holywell, and nearly two miles from the turnpike road. The grounds are spacious, extending along the hills, and glens, and meadows, that reach to the borders of the river, commanding many beautiful views of this picturesque country, and of the channel, reaching nearly to the port of Liverpool. Westerly of Downing stands a circular building of great antiquity, called Mynydd-y-Garreg, on the summit of a hill, which was formerly the Roman Pharos on the Deva. Taking the line along the coast towards the Point of Air, two miles beyond Downing, is Mostyn Hall, a seat belonging to that family, which rises in its genealogical line beyond the Norman Conquest, and is lineally descended from Tudor Trevor, Earl of Hereford. The house, which was probably built in the time of Henry VI, is approached from Rhewl through an avenue of magnificent forest trees.

* "The house itself," Mr. Pennant quaintly informs us, "has little to boast of. I fortunately found it incapable of being improved into a magnitude exceeding the revenue of the family. It has a hall, a library, a parlour capable of containing more guests than I ever wish to see in it at a time, *septem* convivium—novem convicium! and a smoking room, most antiquely furnished. Above stairs is a good drawing-room, and a tea-room. I have Cowley's wish realized, a small house and a large garden."

The park is not large, but it offers a number of bold and interesting scenes. The marine prospects may be especially noticed, which present themselves at successive openings, among the surrounding foliage of venerable oaks and beech trees. The house itself has undergone continual additions and alterations since its first erection, so that there are only slight appearances of its original character. The interior is enriched with an extensive library of ancient and modern lore, old portraits, curiosities, antiquities, and gems, ancient arms, armour, and other monuments of a past age. At the end of the gallery is a spacious room which is connected with the history of the Wars of the Roses, a name which has given a picturesque character to one of the bloodiest and most senseless civil conflicts that ever disturbed and desolated a nation, which, as Shakespeare figuratively writes, sent

"A thousand souls to death and deadly night."

Henry, Earl of Richmond, when he was contemplating the overthrow of the House of York, paid a secret visit to Mostyn Hall, and in this room laid the plan by which he accomplished his purpose. His wily adversary "the crooked-back tyrant," as he is called, had either suspected, or obtained some knowledge of his design and visit to this place, and secretly sent a strong party to seize him. It was life or death to the earl; and in the instant of time, created by a parley with the enemy, he leaped out of a back window, and made his escape through a hole, named to this day "the King's window." To the west lies Talacre, the seat of Sir Edward Mostyn, erected in 1827, in the Elizabethan style of architecture, on the site of the old mansion built in the time of James I. The house is delightfully situated, presenting scenery of the boldest and most extensive description.

On the left of the road from Holywell towards St. Asaph, is the small town of CAERWYS,—the Fort above the Waters,—backed by the high mountain called Moel Park. This was formerly a Roman station, as is testified by the many coins that have been found here, and by the various tumuli that are round it and in the neighbourhood. It is celebrated

also, for the Eisteddvods holden here in early times, and especially for that which was opened under a commission granted by Queen Elizabeth, in 1568, and a more recent one originating with the Gwyneddigion Society, on the 29th of May, 1798. Near Caerwys is the delightful wooded valley of Maesmynan Wort, presenting a picturesque variety of grove, and hill, and dale, with the lofty neighbouring mountain throwing its broad shadow below.

The most exquisite natural charm is ever heightened by a sense of moral beauty. In passing through a succession of these mild and lovely, or bold romantic districts, the Wanderer felt a satisfaction not experienced in his former excursions, as he contemplated the changes that had already taken place, and those more important and salutary ones fast approaching, which, added to its exterior embellishments and improvements, must confer a moral and intellectual dignity upon the country, more gratifying to the eye of the observer than even her picturesque falls and streams, or the splendour of her vales and woodlands. The spirit of freedom, industry, and an era better adapted to develope the intellectual energies of the Welsh, was evidently at work, preparing the social mind for some higher and more advanced state of civilization. The Wanderer marked a self-respect, a degree of courtesy and propriety, in the demeanour of the labouring classes, he had not hitherto beheld. New sources of employment, and both rural and commercial activity, were producing increased prosperity. The enterprising spirit, also, of the public men, —seeking new channels for the investment of capital, leading to an union and extension of interests, bringing their wealth into operation over large tracts of mining or landed property,—was a farther earnest of its rapid progress in the race of modern improvement. The patronage of new agricultural societies, those for the diffusion of education and the Scriptures, with the revival of some of the old bardic meetings, and others of a more modern, learned, and literary

character, bore equal evidence of that zeal and perseverance in the higher classes, so intimately connected with the welfare of the people at large.

The Wanderer pursued this train of thought almost to the forgetfulness of external objects, and it was not till he discovered that the evening was fast wearing away, that he measured his steps with more celerity towards St. Asaph. He had reached the hollow of the hills, along which the Clwyd pursues its course within half a mile of the city, when the moon, which had been for some time overclouded, shone forth with peculiar lustre, and threw its silent, quiet splendours over the scene. So bright and serene was the night, that after taking some refreshment at the White Lion, he was induced to walk as far as the bridge over the Elwy, to watch the playful moonbeams on the waters, before retiring to rest.

The city of St. Asaph contains few objects of interest except the cathedral, to induce the traveller to pay it more than a passing visit. It stands on the side of an eminence on the western bank of the river Elwy, about a mile from its confluence with the Clwyd. Formerly it was called *Llan Elwy*—the Church upon the Elwy. It consists of one long street, tolerably built, the venerable edifice rising above the other buildings on the brow of the hill. Viewed from the bridge below, the appearance of the place, surrounded by waving woods, is exceedingly picturesque; and the neighbouring scenery, from several points, cannot fail to attract the steps of the pedestrian, and more than compensate for any want of interest in the place itself.

The fertile tract of valley in which St. Asaph is situated, known as the Vale of Clwyd, extends not less than twenty-five miles in length, and varies from six to eight in width. It commences beyond Ruthin, and, running northward, contains also the towns of Denbigh and St. Asaph, coming to a termination at Rhuddlan, where the Clwyd becomes a tide

river. As in a later part of his travels the Wanderer would have occasion to give a full description of this extensive and luxuriant valley, he prepared himself on the following morning to continue his excursion, without let or hindrance, to Rhuddlan, Rhyl, Abergely, and to return to St. Asaph by Kinmel and Bôdelwyddan.

Proceeding in a westerly direction, with the Elwy and the dusty turnpike, side by side, the traveller passes Pengwern, the seat of Lord Mostyn, near which that river and the Clwyd unite. Soon the old Castle of Rhuddlan presents itself in solitary grandeur, and a walk of a mile brings the wayfarer to the decayed and insignificant town of that name, though it was formerly reckoned a place of considerable importance. The bridge consists of two arches, with the arms of Hughes, Bishop of St. Asaph, in 1595, upon one of the battlements; and the river is navigable by vessels of small tonnage as far as Rhuddlan. Here are remains of an ancient building, called the Parliament House, which now form part of a private residence in the centre of the town.* As having been the place where the important Statute of Rhuddlan was framed, the late Dean of St. Asaph had a tablet inserted in the wall with the following inscription:—"*This fragment is the remains of the building where King Edward the First held his Parliament, in 1283; in which was passed the Statute of Rhuddlan, securing to the Principality its judicial rights, and independence.*" For the size of the place, and the few travellers who pass through it, the Black-a-Moor is a respectable way-side inn.

Rhuddlan Castle is on the eastern bank of the Clwyd, a short distance from the town. It was built of the red sand-

* It has been said that when Edward palmed his son on the Welsh, he cried out, as distinctly as he could pronounce them, the words EICH DYN—*This is your man;* which, being corrupted into ICH DIEN, became the motto of the future Princes of Wales.

stone found in the adjacent rocks, and formed a square externally, the walls being flanked by six round towers, three of which continue almost entire. The fosse was wide and deep, both sides of the excavation being faced with stone; and the steep escarpment on the river side was secured by high walls, and square bastions, one of which is yet standing.

Rhuddlan appears as a place of importance in the early part of the eleventh century, when Llewelyn ap Sitsylt, Prince of Wales, built a castle here in which he resided. In the time of Gryffydd ap Llewelyn, A.D. 1603, this castle or palace was surprised and burnt by the Saxons under Harold. It was soon restored, but shortly afterwards reconquered by Robert, nephew of Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester. Robert fortified the castle with new works; at subsequent periods it was repeatedly attacked and taken by the Welsh and re-fortified by the English. One of these events is of too curious a nature to be omitted. Towards the latter end of the reign of Richard I., the Earl of Chester being surprised by the Welsh whilst in this castle, sent express to his constable in that city, Roger Lacy, to come to his assistance with what forces he could collect. It was at Midsummer, and the fair-day at Chester. Roger immediately gathered a mob of fiddlers, players, mountebanks, and other idle folk, and marched at the head of this motley group towards Rhuddlan. The Welsh, under Llewelyn, observing at a distance an immense crowd, concluded it to be the English army advancing to the relief of the place, and immediately raised the siege and withdrew their forces with the greatest precipitation. As a recompense for this signal piece of service, the Earl appointed his faithful Roger to the officeof "Magisterium omnium peccatorum et meretricum totius Cestreshire."*

* *Peccator* was written *Leccator* in the latinity of those ages, and meant all sorts of idle, vagabonding, debauched persons.

Archbishop Baldwin in his progress through Wales, was nobly entertained here. In the invasion of Wales by Edward I., that monarch made Rhuddlan his *place d'armés* and magazine of provisions. In 1281 it was attacked by Llewelyn, the last Prince of Wales, and his brother David, but without success; and the latter prince was confined here previous to his removal to Shrewsbury, where he was executed as a traitor. Edward, sensible of the importance of the place, built a new castle a little to the northward of the former one; the finishing of this work took a considerable time. He made the town a free borough and bestowed upon the inhabitants many immunities. He also assembled here, in 1282, a Parliament or council, in which Wales was divided into counties, ancient laws and customs which appeared detrimental were abolished, and new and more advantageous ones introduced, and many important regulations established by what was called the Statute of Rhuddlan, in which he assumed the style of a conqueror of the country.

Three times did old Rhuddlan resound with the revelry of the feast of Christmas, during the reign of this monarch; and here the feeble cry of a woman in travail was heard when Queen Eleanor, suffering the penalty of that "sorrow" entailed alike upon all the daughters of Eve, gave birth to a princess. It was in this place that Edward promised the Welsh to give them for their prince a native of the Principality, who never had spoken a word of English, and whose life and conversation no man could impugn. He fulfilled the letter of his promise by presenting to them his infant son, afterwards Edward II., then just born at Carnarvon. Within the walls of this fortress the false Earl of Northumberland brought his prisoner Richard the Second, and partook of some refreshment on his way to Flint. Rhuddlan Castle was in the great civil war garrisoned for the king, but was taken by General Mytton, in 1646, and in the same or following year ordered by the Parliament to be dismantled.

It is the business of the antiquary and historian to look into "the dark backwards and abysm of time," and even on the mind of a lonely Wanderer, such as I am, reflections, deep and melancholy, could not fail to steal, as I surveyed the dreary fragments of a pomp and majesty long since vanished from the earth, with all the associations of barbaric despotism, feudal gatherings, natural sympathies, and home affections, and I mentally exclaimed, in the altered lines of the great poet,

"Where is the husband now? Where be the brothers?
Where be the sons wherein thou then didst joy?
Who sues, and kneels, and says—'God save the king?'
Where be the bending peers that flattered thee?
Where be the thronging troops that followed thee?
Decline all this, and see what now thou art!"

Morfa Rhuddlan, or Rhuddlan Marsh, is an extensive tract of lowland, lying between the town and the sea. It is celebrated in the history of Matthew of Paris, as the scene where a dreadful and bloody battle occurred, between the ancient Britons headed by Prince Caradoc, and the Saxons led by Offa, King of Mercia, in the year 795, in which the Welsh people were defeated, and their king and leaders slain upon the field. The Saxon prince barbarously gave orders that all the men and children of the enemy should be massacred, and even the women scarcely escaped his fury. Morfa Rhuddlan is also known to have been the place of many a wild and stormy encounter during the civil dissensions and foreign invasions which kept the Cambro-Britons almost continually in the field. As he trod its dreary extensive marsh, the Wanderer recalled to mind the well known and exquisitely plaintive air called *Morfa Rhuddlan*, nor did he forget the noble and beautiful sentiments of the bards commemorative of the brave Caradoc.



About two miles east of Rhuddlan, on the direct road between that town and Holywell, is the romantic village of DISERTH, remarkable in history for its castle, which was erected about half a mile from the village. But a few crumbling walls of this once strong hold, on the summit of a precipitous rock, attest the site of this castle, one of that range of fortresses, extending every ten miles round the coast from Carnarvon to Chester, erected by the politic Edward to break the warlike spirit of his new subjects.

The first burst of the valley of the Clwyd, as it opens upon the spectator from beneath the ruins of Diserth Castle, is surpassingly beautiful. Northward is a length of twelve miles of coast forming the boundary of the vale, with the sea beyond; immediately below, a rich tract of land, dotted over with farms, the river, winding its course beneath the Castle of Rhuddlan, which carries the eye towards the sterile district around the rapidly rising town of Rhyl; on the opposite side of the vale, Gwrych Castle is seen, perched like an eagle's nest on the side of a rock—the town of Abergely—Kinmel, the sumptuous abode of Lord Dinorben—the tower of Bodlewyddan Castle, peeping over a forest of oak—Pengwern, the residence of Lord Mostyn, and, terminating the scene, the bold outline of St. Asaph Cathedral.

At the foot of the mountains, which form the terminus of the range of hills marking the eastern boundary of the vale of Clwyd, are the extensive lead works of Tal yr Goch, which have been in constant working for several centuries.

RHYL is a rapidly rising watering place, built on the shore near the Clwyd, at its junction with the sea. This place owes the prosperity it possesses to its contiguity to Liverpool, from which town it is only distant three or four hours' sail—to its being the outlet of the vale of Clwyd, and the *northern* point from which travellers start on their excursions to the beautiful scenery of Wales—and to its fine and extensive beach, than which nothing can be more splendid

at low water. A ride or drive of comparatively unbounded extent, on a beautiful bed of smooth firm-set sand, with the blue sea on one hand, and the romantic scenery of this marvellous land on the other, is sufficient to put both mind and body into a tone of harmonising vigour, be they ever so disordered. Rhyl was but a few years back an unenclosed common; it now probably numbers a thousand inhabitants. It has a commodious church and two hotels, besides an extensive lodging house, and numerous other sojourning domiciles of second-rate description.*

The landing place from the steam packets is at Foryd, in the mouth of the river Clwyd, nearly a mile from Rhyl, which has many inconveniences attending it, and the walk over the sand banks on the shore, above sea water reach, is both fatiguing and painful.

The most direct route from Rhyl to Abergely, is across the mouth of the Clwyd to Foryd, the passage of which is by boat when the tide is up, while at low water it may be forded. Having crossed over the river, the Wanderer took his way along the shore to Tan yr Ogo, the mouth of a defile which has been the witness of more bloodshed than any place in North Wales. There is nothing interesting in this walk of seven miles, the whole of the land immediately bordering the shore, which was before an extensive marsh, having only been enclosed a few years. Tan yr Ogo, being interpreted, is *under the cave*, and the name is taken from a very singular and extensive cavern near the summit of the rock above, which has been described as possessing the mysterious and fanciful attributes of a stalactical cave, and in some respects resembling the Italian Grotta di Sibylla. Under the foot of

* Many of the respectable residents in the vale of Clwyd have, what is called, *a box*, at Rhyl, and come here with their families during the summer months to inhale the sea breeze, dip in the briny wave, and enjoy all the "otium cum dignitate" of *citizens from home*.

the rock, called Cefn Ogo, is one of the entrance gateways to Gwrych Castle, on the face of which are four modern inscriptions, pointing out the historical events connected with this locality, which are sufficiently interesting and important to be transcribed.

I. "Prior to the Norman Conquest, Harold, in his attempt to subjugate this part of the Principality, was encountered by Gryffydd ap Llewelyn, Prince of North Wales, on the plain near Cefn Ogo, and after a sanguinary battle, in which he was defeated, was driven back to Rhyddlan."

II. "In the reign of William the Conqueror, Hugh Lupus, on his march to invade the island of Anglesea, passing through this defile, was attacked by an armed band of Welshmen, which had been posted here to anticipate his progress, and of which, after an obstinate and protracted battle, 1,100 were left dead on the spot."

III. "In the reign of Henry II., Owen Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales, on his return from Flintshire, fortified himself in this Pass, when he gave battle to the forces of that monarch, and repulsed them with great slaughter; after having secured this important post he retreated to Pen y Parc, in the adjoining parish, where he made head against the English forces, and effectually checked the further invasion of his dominions."

IV. "Near this Pass Richard the Second, whom Percy, Earl of Northumberland, under a pretence of an amicable interview with Bolingbroke, had inveigled from Conway Castle, on his return from Ireland, was, by a military band, bearing the Northumberland banner, surrounded and conducted to Flint Castle, where he was treacherously betrayed by the earl into the power of the usurper."

From Cefn Ogo the road winds along the side of the hill, commanding a view of the vale below, and passes Gwrych Castle, a modern structure, about a mile from Abergely on the road towards Conway. It would be difficult to criticise this incongruous mass of detail and puerility: the position is ill adapted for an edifice of this nature, more resembling an Italian or Syrian convent, built upon the acclivity of Monte Cassino or Mount Libanus, than a castle; wanting, as it does, the solidity and dignity of a structure which makes any pretensions to the castellated style. Although this architectural inconsistency is too apparent, there is, however, something picturesque about the edifice, which, in spite of its defects, causes the stranger to look upon it with admiration.

Tribes of the Hedera genus rejoicingly fling their long and flexible branches along the young walls, as if glad to escape the company of grey towers and tottering ruins, their usual associates, while many-leaved and many-coloured flowering shrubs and green plantations present themselves from every point of view. Whatever may be said about the mistakes already noticed in the castle and its approaches, it is gratifying to record that no gentleman in the vicinity effects more real good than does the benevolent proprietor of Gwrych Castle, who employs almost continually artisans of every description in his various alterations and improvements.

ABERGELY is a neat little town, on the high road between Chester and Bangor, about a mile from the sea shore, where the tired traveller has an opportunity of reposing in quiet and luxury at that queen of hotels, the Bee. The town consists of one long street, containing about 1,300 inhabitants, chiefly employed in mining and agriculture. The church is a plain structure, built in the reign of Henry VIII., and dedicated to St. Michael, which the worthy parishioners have thoroughly whitewashed over, in defiance of all criticism.

From the number of pleasant hamlets and domestic villas which surround Abergely, the neighbourhood must be considered both salubrious and agreeable. The village of Lanfair is built on the Elwy, and beyond it is Llangerniew, and at the summit of the vale of Aled, the village of Llansannan; while the seats of the aristocracy comprise Kinmel, Bodlewyddan, Coedcoch, Garthewin, Havod-unos, Dyffryn Aled, and several others.

Instead of proceeding onwards to Conway, I bent my steps again towards St. Asaph, leaving that place and the other parts of Carnarvonshire until after I had seen the vales of Clwyd and Llangollen. About three miles from Abergely is the little village of St. George, overlooking the beautiful scenery of the vale, remarkable for the sumptuous Gothic mausoleum erected over the vault in which Lady Dinorben

was interred; it is however quite out of character with the simple, unornamented church to which it is attached. Leaving St. George, the imposing entrance gateway of Kinmel, the seat of Lord Dinorben, soon presents itself, the park studded with majestic timber, and herds of deer, some browsing quietly, and others scampering in every direction. Kinmel was extended, indeed almost rebuilt, a few years ago, by Hopper, of London. A magnificent Ionic portico is the principal external feature, while the entrance hall and staircase enriched with marble columns, and the elegantly proportioned and superb dining room, all in perfect style of keeping, prove the taste which has been exercised in building and furnishing this luxurious abode.

From Kinmel the road leads onwards to Bodlewyddan, the residence of Sir John Williams, Bart., which is reached through a massy Gothic gateway. The mansion itself has undergone a metamorphosis from Grecian to the castellated style. The original change was suggested and carried into effect by Mr. Edward Welch, architect, of Liverpool,* and has since been continued under the direction of the agent of the estate. The work is well executed, and with one or two slight exceptions, in perfect consistency of character. From the turrets of the castle, the traveller may enjoy one of the richest and most luxuriant prospects that can meet the eye; the wide spreading vale stretches forward like the *val sans retour* of fairy land; studded with beautiful seats, and quiet homes of romantic loveliness,—Rhyl, and the extensive marine view beyond—the sinuous course of the Foryd—the bold towers of Rhuddlan—St. Asaph Cathedral, and the extensive and far distant mountain scenery around.

St. Asaph is four miles from Bodlewyddan, the road being

* This gentleman was one of the architects of the Birmingham Town Hall, a structure of such solidity and grandeur as to call forth the commendation of every visitor to that town.

distinguished by no marked peculiarity until the city is nearly reached, when it becomes more picturesque, and the river from the bridge over the Elwy tempts the stranger to stay his progress for a time. Some description of St. Asaph has been given in a preceding page, and before traversing the vale of Clwyd to Denbigh, there is only required a brief account of its ecclesiastical edifice.

St. Asaph Cathedral appears, from the style of its original features, to have been built in the thirteenth century, in what is called the *Early English*, verging into the *Decorated;* but like every other edifice of so distant a date, has, in the course of centuries, undergone a variety of changes, in architectural conformity with the taste of the times. The most conspicuous of these changes is in the enlargement of the windows, which followed the general introduction of stained glass into this country.

Although almost every ancient ecclesiastical building presents the spectacle of a mixture of styles, which would be deemed inconsistent if adopted by the modern architect, yet in all these variations there breathes a spirit of beauty and of science, which lamentably contrasts with the innovations of the present times; in illustration of this remark, the antiquary has merely to glance at the miserable inroads which have been made upon the purity of this cathedral, within the last half century.

In the year 1783, the choir was in a great measure rebuilt by Turner, the then county architect, in grievous defiance of all character and taste. In the year 1810, the nave and transepts underwent an internal modification by Gummo, by no means creditable to that architect; the introduction of a coved and plastered ceiling under the old oak roof, with fantastic groined ribs of stucco, and the blocking up for this purpose of the unique and beautiful clerestory windows, accord very badly with all notions of taste and pro-

priety. It would be a compliment to any dignitary to restore this portion of the edifice to its pristine state.

At the intersection of the nave and transepts rises a plain, lofty, square tower, supported by magnificent arches. The piers which sustain the arches of the nave have no capitals; but the mouldings run continuously through, producing a very rich and harmonising effect.

In the year 1832, the choir was extended westward under the tower, beneath the western arch of which a stone screen and organ loft were erected under the superintendence of Mr. Jones, of Chester. Although the style of this screen is of too late a date to associate with that of the rest of the edifice, yet the masonry is beautifully executed, in a superior stone from the quarry of Llanasa.

Since the extension of the choir the dry rot has very unfortunately made its' appearance in this edifice, and is yearly making great ravages among the old and new work. This may be attributed to the want of proper ventilation, and the insufficient seasoning of the new timber. It is a question whether it ever can be thoroughly exterminated, except by sweeping the whole of the infected work away. The means resorted to for warming the choir with hot water has a tendency to increase the disposition to rot rather than the contrary; for wherever there is the germ of vegetable fungus, heat must necessarily precipitate its developement, and more especially a damp heat like this.

The choir is at present very inefficient, in consequence of the funds originally appropriated to its support being diverted into other channels; with such revenues, however, as are attached to this establishment, connected with a wise economy in their expenditure, a fund might readily be formed for the better support of the choir. The organ has a full and beautiful tone.

In the north transept, which is now used as a chapter house, is a very beautiful piece of statuary, consisting of a marble

figure representing Dean Shipley robed, in a sitting posture, on an elevated pedestal, executed in 1829, by Ternouth, a pupil of Chantry. Here, too, is deposited the mutilated figure of Bishop David ap Owen, who presided over this see in the fifteenth century. This monument was originally in the chancel in a recumbent posture, but was removed from thence when the choir was rebuilt, and placed in its present verticalposition, by Dean Shipley.

In the south transept is erected an open sarcophagus, or shrine on an elevated base, as a tribute to the memory of Bishop Luxmore, 1830. The design and workmanship are each beautiful, and the material of the purest description.

On the wall of the north aisle, in the nave, is also a very beautiful marble monument to the memory of the late Sir John Williams, by Westmacott, representing two female figures, with wings, embracing each other, and in the act of ascending from earth to heaven.

At the western doorway externally, is the tomb of the celebrated Dr. Isaac Barrow, formerly Bishop of the Diocese, which once bore the following words on its tablet:— "O Vos transeuntes in Domum Domini in Domum Orationis orate pro Conservo Vestro ut inveniat Misericordiam in Die Domini;"*—but in repairing some injuries which it had received, the occasion was taken to leave out this part as savouring too much of the Popish doctrine of purgatory. This record belonged to history, and ought not to have been so treated. There is, also, a mural inscription to Mrs. Hemans, the favourite poetess of England, who lived many years in this neighbourhood.

The general appearance of this cathedral, both external and internal, is neat and clean; and of its yard it may be said, that it is kept in better order than any other in the kingdom.

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* Willis's Survey of St. Asaph.



CHAPTER IV.

VALE OF CLWYD—DENBIGH—RUTHIN—WREXHAM.

> Not a tree,
> A plant, a leaf, a blossom, but contains
> A folio volume. We may read, and read,
> And read again, and still find something new.
>
> *Hurdis.*

The learned and spiritually-minded Flavel has an observation in one of his works, which forms an excellent commentary on the motto at the head of this chapter. He says, "the objects presented to the mind are the companions with whom our hearts talk and converse." I remembered this remark as I was about to leave St. Asaph, on my pilgrimage through the vale of Clwyd; the morning, however, had opened out in the midst of a pelting shower of rain, and the thick hazy state of the atmosphere seemed likely to prevent any "talk and converse" I might be desirous of holding with the interesting objects around me. And so, indeed, it proved; for hill and mountain, tree and forest, hamlet and stream, were covered with one tissue of vapour. This hazy veil concealed, it is true, the distinct realities of things, but it furnished those prestiges with which the imagination sported in capricious luxury, and moulded into all those peculiar forms, which corresponded with the train of thought with which the mind was at that moment engaged.

The road that I was traversing lay on that tract of high ground which bisects the vale at its broadest point, near St. Asaph. On the right was the Elwy, which for a short time pursues a parallel course with the Clwyd to their

junction near the edge of Rhuddlan Marsh. This little river gives its own name to that part of the vale through which it runs, and it is impossible to imagine a place of more gentle beauty. Neither falling torrent nor frowning rocks appertain to it, but the stream glides through its pastoral solitude in murmuring measures of Arcadian melody, until it issues forth through the stone arches of the beautiful bridge which carries the turnpike road to Abergely.

It was only when I had cleared the last group of patriarch oaks, which mark the domain on the left of the road, that the mists began to roll away, and the sweep of the vale of Clwyd, which Aikin calls "the Eden of North Wales," unfolds itself to the eye. The hills, which bound the vision on either side, running the length of the vale, consist of a series of mountain reaches, folded one upon another, affording passes strangely wild and beautiful, and sheltering the hamlets of Taler goch and Bod fary, each with its sanctuary and grey tower, marking those green spots of social existence. The thick fogs, which had been resting on the depths of the valley, were beginning to creep along the sides of Moel Fammau, as I approached this "mother of mountains," as its name imports, and caught by the currents of the higher atmosphere, weaved round her venerable head a *coiffure* of clouds,—a web of gauzy tissue, fold after fold,—grey in all its shades,—shapeful, grotesque, and shifting as the clouds themselves,—leaving the lower mountain slopes and the vale mapped into fertile fields, and opening to view the heathy defile through which runs the road that connects Mold with Denbigh.

From the elevated situation on which the traveller is progressing, and from the spreading out of the vale before him, the gigantic fragments of what was once the Castle of Denbigh soon reveal themselves to his view, crowning the solitary lime-stone rock on which the fortress was built, and may be seen for many miles before he reaches the ancient

town which it formerly protected. Nearly opposite to it, and at about the distance of a mile to the left, may be descried the venerable tower of Whitchurch, occupying the site of another lime-stone layer of inferior level. The holy edifice has outlived the martial fortress, as it may be truly said, the things pertaining to eternity stretch beyond the subjects of time. The priest continues to offer up prayer at the sacred altar, while the chivalric defenders of that proud castle have found their resting places within its silent vaults.

The town of Denbigh, that is what constituted the ancient town from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, was gathered within the circling walls that run round the rocky hill on which stood the fortress; and nothing, perhaps, could better show the altered condition of society than to contemplate, at the same time, the narrow limits marked by the boundary of those crumbling walls, and the cheerful street which now descends the hill in perfect security, running away, as it were, from the needless protection of the huge fortress, and spreading into the vale, to invite the foot of the traveller to enter into its peaceful and attractive precincts.

Denbigh Castle, or, as it was formerly called, Caledfryn-yn-Rhôs,—the Castle on the craggy hill in Rhôs, is considered to have had an existence as early as the twelfth century, and is referred to in some ancient accounts of the feudal conflicts which belonged to that age. David, the brother of Llewelyn, had the custody of this castle during the time of his servile devotion to the English court. After his reconciliation to his brother, and on the unfortunate death of that prince at Builth, he assumed the crown of Wales, and summoned his chieftains to this strong hold; and it is not unworthy of remark, that when he was finally betrayed into the hands of the enemy, his former service under the English monarch became the ground of his condemnation and barbarous execution, as a traitor, at Shrewsbury. After the death of David, it was given by the conqueror to Henry de Lacy, Lord of Lincoln,

who erected on the site of the original fortress that magnificent castle whose gigantic remains are seen at the present day. Subsequently it passed into the hands of successive court minions, till at last it fell into those of Elizabeth's haughty favourite, Leicester. During its transition state, Denbigh Castle was the theatre of extraordinary events. In the civil wars of the rival Houses of York and Lancaster, it stood for the White Rose of England, and maintained an obstinate siege under Edward IV., and such was the desolation that pervaded the neighbourhood in this struggle, that it is said by the historian of Gwydir, "the whole country was reduced to cold cinders," and that many, "who had mortgaged their lands thought them not worth redeeming." Denbigh reverted to the Crown, and the command of this strong hold devolved upon a succession of brave and loyal men, amongst whom were the valiant Richard Myddleton and Sir William Salusbury, otherwise called Hosannau Gleision, or the Blue Stocking, from his partiality to the trunk hose of our ancestors of that colour. The latter resembled very much the old Knight of Woodstock, as described by the Northern Magician, in his courage and loyalty, and it was during the governorship of this gallant gentlemen that the castle sustained a siege of five months against the Parliament. Religion and loyalty were singularly blended in the mind of the old cavalier, and he was wont to commence his official letters with this motto:—"In nomine Jesu." The unfortunate Charles retired to this fortress after his defeat at Rowton Moor, and remained two nights in the castle; and it was at this time that the good governor discoursed so freely with his Royal master on his affairs, that the king afterwards said, "Never did prince hear so much truth at once."

Denbigh Castle surrendered to the Parliament's forces on the 26th of October, 1646, but not until its bold commander had received the king's orders to that effect; and then only on the most honourable terms. The king long

remembered his faithful servant, and as a last token of his regard, when the mistaken but noble-minded monarch was brought to the block, he sent him a scull-cap, most beautifully embroidered on crimson silk, which he had constantly worn. This precious relic is still preserved in the family.

Old Churchyard, who seemed to delight in winding his poetic wreath round the ancient fortresses of his native land, dwells with peculiar satisfaction on the most minute details of this favourite place.

"This castle stands on top of rocke most hye,
A mighti cragge, as hard as flint or steele;
A massie mount, whose stones so deepe doth lye
That no device may well the bottome feele,
The rocke discends beneath the ancient towne,
About the which a stately wall goes downe,
With buyldings great, and posterns to the same,
That goes through rocke, to give it greater fame.

The quaint and veracious Leland, too, who saw it at a time anterior to the poet, describes it in his own graphic style. "The castelle is a very large thinge, and hath many towers yn it. The gatehouse is a marvellous strange and great peace of worke. It hath diverse wardes, and diverse porteolicies."

Such was once the Castle of Denbigh, that now presents only a series of picturesque fragments, with which the philosopher "may point a moral, or adorn a tale." Its massy grouted walls, in many parts twelve feet thick, have yielded to the violent means of hasty destruction, or the sure, but more slow, progress of time. The whole extensive area of this "rocke so hye," is covered with fallen and tottering ruins, in many places twined round with the Herculean arms of the most luxuriant ivy, as if holding them up mockingly in the very teeth of the storm that sweeps over this scene of desolation. Nothing now remains of this superb edifice that can attest its enduring strength and ancient splendour, except those gigantic remnants which the traveller's eye measures with astonishment, and those broken lines which guide, and perhaps de-

ceive, the indefatigable antiquary, who, like our pleasant friend of Monkbarns in search of the Prætorium, may pride himself upon discoveries which admit neither of proof nor contradiction.

The face of the grand northern gate has escaped, in some degree, the ravages of destruction, and consists of a magnificent pointed arch, over the centre of which is an ornamented niche containing, as old Leland describes it, "the image of Hen. Lacy, Erle of Lincoln, in his statelie long robes." Of the two octagonal towers, which flanked the entrance, only the crumbling ruins of one remains, with some broken walls, which serve to describe the figure of this part of the building. When I stood before the great gate, this palace of ancient days was turned into a stye, and its inhabitants gave audible tokens of their satisfactory possession of the spot immediately under "the image of the Erle of Lincoln," and of the bitter change which had passed on this "seat so sure," which the poet had vainly predicted "would last till judgment day."

> " We build with what we deem eternal rock ;
> A distant eye asks where the fabric stood ?
> While in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,
> The undiscoverable secret sleeps."

The chapel of St. Hilary which is now, as it was in former times, the parish church, stands near the ruined fortress, and is in a good state of preservation. Near to it is the skeleton of another edifice of the same kind, commenced, but never finished, by the Earl of Leicester, when he was lord of the domain of Denbigh; and though a considerable sum was raised by the inhabitants of the borough for its completion, Essex, another of the favourites of Elizabeth, when passing through this place for Ireland, persuaded these simple-minded men to lend him the money towards his ill-fated expedition, which was never afterwards returned.

The view from that part of the "massie mount" which is

now used as a bowling green, is surpassingly beautiful. The eye ranges along the belt of the Clwydian hills that bound it on either side, with their summits here and there crested into sharp peaks, or occasionally gathered into forms, which Mr. Gilpin denominates "heavy and lumpish." Beneath, in the hollow of the vale, the gentle Clwyd, though somewhat of a diminutive stream, curvets in all the wantonness of unrivalled dominion and ample space, tracing the neighbouring lands into all the varieties of figure which correspond with her own capricious course. On all sides the landscape swells into majesty, or subsides into the sweetest recesses of sequestered life. Herds of living and lowing animals graze over the rich meadows, and flocks of sheep pasture the verdant slips that ascend the mountain side, or dot their towering steeps, like fleecy spots upon a ground of flowering heath. In some favoured tracks the adventurous plough has already overcome the difficulties of hill culture, and consecrated to Ceres the unfruitful waste, filling her golden horn with the varied treasures of the seasons. The picture of the Mantuan bard might almost be transferred to the vale of Clwyd :—

——— Serunt, et vomere duras
Exercent colles; atque horum asperrimo pascunt.

It was Autumn when I looked upon this beautiful scene. The foliage of the trees was deeply dyed with the many-coloured paints of this rich period of the year. The bright red leaves of the mountain ash, the deep orange of the chestnut, and the pale yellow of the fading poplar mingled with the struggling tints of the sycamore, and the sober russet of the old oaks; while the interposing meadows, comprising every shade of green, formed the quiet media that subdued and blended the whole. The little hamlets that nestled in the mountain nooks, sent up the light blue smoke of their peaceful homesteads in pictured columns. The stately, and in some instances, magnificent villas that graced the river's side, or sought the shelter of the neighbouring hills, revealed

themselves by the sparkling silver lights which they reflected from the setting sun. Such a clear calm evening I had scarcely before witnessed, with a landscape of so much majesty and beauty, gathering in its range the striking contrasts of natural scenery, and softening the whole with that marvellous harmony of light and shade, through the most delicate gradations of tone, which form the true *chiaro scuro*, till the aerial vision vanished in the long line that stretches out of the vale over the level tract of Rhuddlan, to the rock of Diserth, and the broad sea beyond.

"For every Englishman who dwells in the valley a native must go to the mountains," is a common saying in Wales; which seems to infer that the wealth and taste of England have appropriated many of these pleasant places. This circumstance has introduced both English manners and language into the most secluded spots, and has given rise to a style of pronunciation difficult to be understood, and sometimes involving the most ludicrous mistakes. An instance of this kind occurred to me as I was journeying from St. Asaph to Denbigh.

On this occasion the drifting shower compelled me to avail myself of the assistance of the omnibus which plies between Rhyl and Denbigh, in making my transit to the latter place. I had taken my station beside the driver of this vehicle, and soon fell into conversation with him upon the different topics which the passing scenes presented. He was a shrewd fellow, and knew how to crack a joke as well as any four-in-hand of the Jehu tribe; and besides, which was of more importance to me, he was acquainted with almost every person he met, and familiar with every object on our way. As the jolting carriage was slowly ascending one of the hills, a stranger with his dogs and fowling piece passed us, well mounted upon a handsome nag, whose plethoric chest and sides proclaimed the abundance and quality of his provender. The stranger somewhat condescendingly nodded to my companion, and his salute was returned on his part by a most respectful greeting.

I enquired his name and calling, and the son of the whip gave me his cognomen, adding significantly as to the latter part of the question, that he was a lyar.* "A liar," I replied in consternation, "I never heard of such a profession—why I should sooner have taken him for a miller, by the grist which he and his fat palfrey seem to have taken to swell both their sides to such dimensions." The driver chuckled audibly at the idea, and contrived by dint of sundry evolutions in his instruments of speech, to make me understand that he was a lawyer. "I could not help laughing," he added, "at your notion of a miller and his grist, and by St. David you was not far wrong; for these gentlemen are pretty plentiful in our country, and they always contrive to take heavy toll from anybody that falls into their clutches." I was greatly amused at this whimsical mistake, which so unintentionally involved a severe sarcasm upon that professional casuistry which endeavours "to make the worse appear the better reason," so common amongst gentlemen learned in the law. It may not be out of place to mention here, that however the Welsh may be disposed to petty litigation, they are by no means addicted to those deeper crimes which call for the heavier penalties of the law. When the Lord Chief Justice Dougherty was leaving Beaumaris, where his family had long been residing, after an assize in which there had not been a single criminal case for trial, he turned to his Irish servant, and said in allusion to this circumstance, "Well, Pat, what would they say to such a thing in *our* country?" The Hibernian replied, with an evident air of self-complacency, in the true Irish brogue,—"I'll tell you what it is, your Honour, these Welsh are a poor mane-spirited people, and havn't the heart to do any thing worth hanging for."

* The word lawyer is pronounced by the Anglo-Welsh somewhat as we do the instrument called the lyre.

A little more than a mile from Denbigh are the woody scenes of Gwannynog, which were once visited by the celebrated Dr. Johnson. In memory of this visit a urn was erected by his friend, Dr. Myddleton, who then resided at this seat.

The sun was up, and had commenced for some time his glorious career in the heavens, when I left "the town and castle of Denbigh, where," as Sir John Price goes on to say, "is one of the greatest markets in the Marches of Wales." This market of the Marches, however, had no charms for me, though it was the periodical day of its observance. I had seen "the strongest castle and the fairest valley of this realme," and that was enough for a wanderer like myself. I followed the direction of the long flowing street, and turning to the right at its termination, I soon reached the open country, in the direction for Ruthin.

The little hamlet of Llanrhaiadr, through which the road passes, stands upon a slight eminence, about four miles from Denbigh. The interesting church and churchyard will detain the lingering foot of the traveller for many an hour. The east window of the sacred edifice contains a beautiful specimen of stained glass. The subject of the painting is the Root of Jesse, and represents the genealogical tree, springing from the loins of the patriarch, and comprising all the kings of Israel and Judah, encircled by branches and embowered in foliage, till the advent of the Saviour. A splendid full-length recumbent figure of Humphrey Jones, in full court dress, sculptured in white marble, lies on the left of the chancel. Monuments, containing the records of antiquity, rear themselves on every side in the churchyard, particularly one to the memory of John ab Robert, which descends through an infinity of abs from Cadvant, an ancient prince of Powis Land. I must not omit one, however, to the memory of Anne the wife of Edward Parry, to which appertains a most marvellous story. This pious female had opened her house for the preaching of the

Methodists in this place, and originated a Sunday school in a neighbouring village, which she energetically maintained by her personal exertions. She ended a life of laborious benevolence by a peaceful death, and, forty-three years after her decease, on the occasion of her son's burial in the same tomb, from some circumstances her coffin was opened, and the body of this excellent woman was found to be in a perfect state of preservation, undecayed in the slightest degree, and her countenance bearing the hues of living health. The very flowers which had been strewed upon her body, it is said, were as fresh in colour, and as fragrant in odour, as when they were first plucked from their native stems.*

The sun had neared the western range of the Clwydian hills when I left Llanrhaiadr to resume my onward course towards Ruthin. His lingering rays were still playing upon the opposite ridges, tipping their summits with borders of burnished gold. Here and there, in rapid succession, broad and strong refractions gushed in streams down the slopes, extricating, in their flashes, the peculiar beauties of valley and mountain from the colourless shade of twilight, that was gently creeping over all terrestrial objects. There is a sort of enchantment belonging to these bright and fluctuating scenes,—the more enjoyed and the longer remembered, perhaps, because they are in themselves rare and transitory. Such is our nature, as Hawk-eye would have said; and when they are gone, and, it may be, gone for ever, we recal them from the cells of memory, and they come forth at our bidding in all the freshness of reality, as at the moment when they were first beheld. I have often thought that there are few, per-

* The body of this lady was exhumated about three years afterwards, and was nearly in the same state of preternatural preservation. This account was furnished to me by the worthy clerk of the parish, and was corroborated by a gentleman connected with the medical profession, whom I afterwards met with at Ruthin, and now mayor of that place, who had subjected the body, at the second disinterment, to the closest personal scrutiny.

haps not any, of the inward emotions of the soul, but what may have their types in the attributes of external nature; and this exercise of the reflective faculty appears, mentally, very much like physical refraction, bringing back, again and again, the phantasies of years departed behind the dark mountains of the past.

"Break, Phant'sy, from thy cave of cloud,
And spread thy purple wings;
Create of airy forms a stream,
And though it be a waking dream,
Yet let it like an odour rise,
To all my senses here,
And fall like sleep upon my eyes,
Or musick on mine ear."

Within three miles from Ruthin is the little enclosure, which contains the "Three Sisters," as they are called. There is a brief narrative connected with this spot, which the collector of way-side stories would not omit to record; because it perpetuates the remembrance of those household endearments, which, after all, constitute the greatest charm of human life. A dangling wicket on the right leads the wanderer from the high road, and introduces him to three noble chestnuts, which spread their gigantic branches over the green area. These venerable trees have been stricken by many a wintry blast, and tell of a long roll of years, that have swept over them since they were first planted. The "Three Sisters," as these trees are named, were planted by the three daughters of Sir William Salusbury, the Blue Stocking lord, before mentioned. The property on which they grow, has passed into the hands of Sir Walter Bagot, through a singular circumstance. The baronet had been grouse shooting amongst the hills in the neighbourhood, and had the misfortune to lose a favourite pointer dog, for the recovery of which he advertized a reward. The animal strayed into these grounds, and was sent by the noble owner to Blythfield, in Staffordshire, where Sir

Walter resided. This led to an exchange of compliments, and when the baronet returned to that quarter, in the following season, he paid his personal respects to the Welshman, which led to a matrimonial connection with one of the three sisters. Before the separation which this marriage occasioned, the happy trio planted each a chestnut sapling in token of their mutual affection and sisterly union, and these tender scions have grown into the three time-worn trees, which attract the traveller's eye, as much by their extraordinary beauty as by the interesting incidents with which they stand in connection.

Ruthin, Mr. Gilpin very graphically describes as being placed "on a rising ground in a dish of mountains," and contains a pleasant and respectable little community. The ancient history ascends to the period of the renowned King Arthur, and I saw in the market-place a rude block of limestone on which that prince is said to have beheaded his rival Huail, the brother of Gildas, the historian. When the grant of this domain was bestowed upon Lord Grey in the thirteenth century, Ruthin became a fortified place, and was surrounded by a strong wall, defended by massy octagonal towers. This town was surprised and pillaged by Owen Glendwr, in return for the injuries he had received at the hands of his rival de Grey.

Ruthin Castle, or Rhyddin, the red fortress, called so from the colour of the stone employed in its erection, was built by the Lord de Grey. It did not crown the hill like that of Denbigh, but rather sprang from its shelving side, with its aspect fronting the vale to the west, and consisted of two courts divided from each other by a deep fosse, cut through the rock upon which it was based, with a stout wooden bridge of communication. Its massive masonry and lofty superstructure were after the fashion of those Norman fortresses which Edward the First erected, to keep in awe his newly vanquished subjects. So extensive was its dimensions, and so pleasant its site, that old Camden calls it "a stately and

beautiful castle, capable of receiving a numerous family," and the Poet of the "Worthines of Wales" sings of it thus:—

> "It shewes within, by dubble walles and waies,
> A deepe device did first erect the same;
> It makes our worlde to thinke on elders daies,
> Because the worke was formde in such a frame."

In the Civil Wars the castle was besieged by the Parliamentary forces under General Mytton, when it capitulated; but, in less than three years after that event, the garrison was disbanded, and the fortress dismantled and left in ruins. A new castellated mansion has been erected by Mr. West; but the estate is the property of Miss Harriet Myddelton, one of the co-heiresses of Chirk Castle.

It was on one of those remarkable days in the Autumn of the year, when a cloudless sky and fervid sun gave such transparent clearness to every object, that I entered this castle domain. The time and season were in a particular manner suited to a visit to this singular place, combining, as it does, the crumbling fragments of a former age, with the young creations of the present day.

The walls that formerly had bristled with hostile arms, were now richly hung with festoons of "vegetable furniture," in green, and purple, and scarlet dies, like the gaudy ensigns of a friendly force gathered from all lands. The battle-cry had subsided, and the song of birds filled the air with the melody of peace. The "great High Priest of Earth" was performing his sacrifice in the heavens, and calling up incense from every herb and flower to hallow his presence. The ancient moat and lake were now covered with a thick green sward, and the venerable portcullis stood in all its glory surrounded by a wreath of ivy. I ascended to the latter, and looked upon a scene of undisturbed tranquillity and gladness. The air was perfumed with the odour of the various tribes of clematis, with eyes of white, and blue, and violet, peeping out of their Virgin's Bower. The walls, those blood-

stained walls of other days, were clothed with the coloured parasites of this and the western hemisphere, in all the varied livery of the season;—below and on the sides of the hill, the firm red tints of the hawthorn gaily intermingled with the changing hues of the forest; around and above was the gleaming atmosphere, arched with a sky of peerless cerulean.

The secret passages which are yet preserved, introduce the traveller to one and another vestige of the ancient castle, until by a flight of steps he ascends into what was once the banquet room, hung round with "nature's tapestry," as it was formerly with the webs of the Gobelins. The visiter is then conducted through a long dark vault in which used to be the ancient dungeons, and is made to undergo the *mimic* terrors of the chain and ball, which are intended to recal the *real* horrors of that dismal place. There yet remain to be seen the ancient court yard, and its deep central well, which supplied the castle's garrison as it does the modern mansion with water. The present residence is built in architectural keeping with its predecessor, but its appearance is somewhat disfigured with the cement jointing of the stone work. The Engine passage is magnificent, and extends one hundred and sixty-eight feet. The rooms are adorned with articles of *vertu* from the Italian states, beautiful drawings by Kiserman, models of Mont Blanc, Chamouni, and the Pass of the Simplon, with alabaster vases, some valuable pictures, and specimens of ancient furniture of the reign of Henry the Eighth. The view from the Eagle tower is very extensive; and commands the course of the vale to the little port of Rhyl in the extreme distance. The visiter must not fail to pass through the armoury, which contains a rich variety of national specimens arranged in chronological order, and many from foreign lands.

The church of Ruthin was anciently conventual, and belonged to a religious order of monks, under the alluring title of *Bon-hommes*. The institution, however, changed its character, and, during the rule of John de Grey, in the

early part of the fourteenth century, was formed into a collegiate chapter. The carved ceiling is a specimen of curious workmanship, thrown into small squares, ornamented with nearly five hundred different hieroglyphics, heraldic emblems, and other subjects, of which I afterwards saw a very neatly executed drawing, by an ingenious young gentleman of this place. There are several monuments, ancient and modern; but the most interesting is that raised to the memory of Dr. Gabriel Goodman, who was founder of the Grammar School. The good doctor also afforded his valuable support to many able scholars, and greatly assisted the indefatigable Camden in his travels, for whom he afterwards obtained a Mastership in Westminster School. This place gave birth to the celebrated Godfrey Goodman, who was successively a high churchman,—the panegyrist of Cromwell,—and a convert to the "ancient faith." He died at his house at Ty-dû, in Carnarvonshire, in the pale of the Romish Church, leaving this confession in his last testament:—"I do acknowledge the Church of Rome to be the mother church, and I do verily believe that no other church hath any salvation in it, but only as far as it concurs with the Church of Rome."

The mill is an object of some antiquarian interest, which from the red stone cross in the middle of its eastern gable, is supposed by the Rev. Archdeacon Newcome, the amiable and learned historian of the place, to have formed the chapel of the castle garrison. This conjecture is strengthened by the remains of several pointed arches, which lead into the interior of the buildings, and strangely contrast their present servile uses, with the holy purposes to which they were originally applied.

The way to Wrexham, which is distant from Ruthin about sixteen miles, is full of the majesty of nature. Moel Ciw, Fromsa, and Vainol, continue in succession, with their summits piercing the clouds. Through a gorge at

the foot of the latter mountain, the turnpike road pursues its course, with the black hills of Flintshire on the left, and the enormous range of Cyrn y Brain, in the sister county of Denbigh on the right; and then making a *detour*, runs rapidly down the more open country, crossing Offa's Dyke in it progress, till it brings the traveller within the precincts of

"Trim Wricksam towne, a pearle of Denbighshiere."

Whatever this place might have been in the days of the poet Churchyard, there is little now worth observation, except the church, which is written down as one of the "seven wonders of Wales." The quadrangular tower of this building rises one hundred and thirty-five feet in height, with projecting abutments, crocketted pinnacles, and open worked balustrade, with four pierced lantern turrets crowning the top. The interior is spacious, divided into nave and side aisles, with conglomerated columns and pointed arches, and a ceiling of the most exquisite groined oak in pannels, ornamented with angel-heads.

The church contains two fine pictures from the pencil of Rubens; but the chancel possesses an object of the greatest admiration to all visiters, in the monument erected to the memory of Mrs. Mary Myddelton, which represents the resurrection, at that point of time when, from the sacred testimony, "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." A beautiful figure, clad in the purest drapery and in the most graceful attitude, appears as if bursting from the tomb, and rising from the sarcophagus with the countenance of an angel. The attributes of the broken lid and the falling pyramid, with cherubic forms supporting the rising saint, make up a scene of extraordinary interest. This monument is from the chisel of Roubilliac, a native of Lyons, and is considered superior to his statue of the Duke of Argyle, in the character of Eloquence, in Westminster Abbey.

This celebrated man was the protegée of Sir Edward Wal-

pole, the Mæcenas of the day, and it is somewhat surprising that this beautiful piece is not to be found in the list of his productions given by Horace Walpole in his catalogue of the works of distinguished artists.* There are several other ancient, and some handsome modern, monuments in this church. A curious piece of antiquity stands at the east end, consisting of a brazen eagle and pedestal of the same metal, formerly used as a reading desk, presented by John ap Gryffydd ap Dafydd of Ystwan, in this neighbourhood. There are, also, many quaint inscriptions in the consecrated ground that surrounds the church, which might do very well for a "Chapter on Churchyards."

* Very soon after Roubilliac arrived in England, and was then working as journeyman to Carter, a maker of monuments, having spent an evening at Vauxhall, on his return he picked up a pocketbook, which he found to enclose several bank notes of value. He immediately advertised the circumstance; and Sir Edward Walpole claimed the pocketbook. Justly appreciating and remunerating the integrity of the poor young man, and admiring the specimens of his skill and talent which he exhibited, he promised to patronise him through life; and he faithfully performed that promise.—*Walpole's Lives.*

CHAPTER V.

RUABON—WYNNSTAY—CHIRK.

Now, Wynnstay! comes thy wide far-spreading park,
With its green bosom grateful to the eye,
Stretching all brightly to the valley, dark
And shelter'd from the scorching beams on high.
Still through the old rich tinted trees we gaze
Down the wild vistas of th' encircling wood,
While startled deer and fawns, in sportive maze,
Fly from the knolls where they have browsing stood.

Wilkinson's Sketches of Wales.

"I AM not much unwilling to peregrine motion for a time," is the observation of that most worthy personage Mr. Francis Osborne, in his letter to his son, whilst making the tour of Europe. The sentiment accorded with my own, and my restless foot was soon in "peregrine motion" towards Ruabon, which I reached through a road more remarkable for the dingy and repulsive characteristics of a mining and manufacturing district, than for any of those beautiful objects of natural scenery which solace the spirit of a wayfarer in Wales.

The church of Ruabon, however, is quite another thing, and contains some of the finest works of art from the chisels of Rhysbrac and Nollekens. Amongst these is the monument to Sir W. W. Wynne, Solicitor General in the time of James the Second, represented in the act of addressing the assembly at St. Stephen's, with a tablet bearing this motto—

"Assertori Libertatis Publicœ."

There is another to his descendant, and Lady Rennetta his wife, the latter under the character of Hope, surrounded with

the attributes of the cheerful goddess. Besides these there is one containing the recumbent figures of a mailed crusader and his wife, in the dress of the times, encircled by sculptured figures of knights and pilgrims in ornamented niches.

The ample gates of Wynnstay Park fly open to the visiter, whether he come on foot, or horse, or even in a carriage. The appearance of the sleek and portly warder seems to announce that the traveller is entering upon the region of peace and plenty. The approach to the mansion is by a spacious gravel road about a mile in length, lined on each side with stately trees, "each one separately a patriarch of the forest." This avenue is, perhaps, the most beautiful in the kingdom, describing its bright ochre line gradually ascending to the point of vision, till it suddenly disappears on the right, and glides forward through a regiment of oaks and chestnuts to the princely hall of this ancient family. I turned off to the right almost immediately on entering the domain, to take a more discursive view of the grounds, and crossing a rude wooden bridge that spans the brawling brook, skirted the margin of the lower lake, and wended my way "through glades and glooms" till I reached the bath. A clear stream of water is kept perpetually running through the lion figure-heads on each side of the reservoir, and the mosaic floor at the bottom appears to dance in the current of the lucid element.

The path now ascends through every variety of prospect, distant and near, and passes within view of the mimic cascade, which is formed by diverting the numerous brooks and rills in the neighbourhood into a confluence, and pouring their asembled waters, in a descent of thirty feet, over a lofty ledge formed of artificial rock-work, and covered with mosses, lichens, and evergreens, which sparkled underneath and around in all their varied and glossy colouring. The Laurel Walk, as it is called, succeeds, and leads the visiter to the elevated glade, on which stands the Obelisk, a fluted Doric column, one hundred feet in height, supporting an

entablature and a circular balustrade, the whole surmounted by a magnificent bronze urn encircled with goats' heads. The pedestal is sixteen feet square, decorated with four eagles holding wreaths of oak leaves and acorns, finely moulded in bronze. The court in which the cenotaph stands describes an area of nearly eighty feet, and is protected by massy iron balustrades. A door opens to the spiral staircase, which leads to the top of the obelisk, over which is an inscription to Sir Watkin William Wynne, in remembrance of whom it was erected "by his affectionate mother," and on the north side, in letters of copper, is recorded this sentence:—

"FILIO OPTIMO,
MATER EHEU! SUPERSTES."

The road, after leaving this place, speedily glides from underneath the lofty covering of the clustering trees, and enters upon the open spacious park on which stands the noble mansion. Wynnstay, or, as it was formerly called, Watt-Stay, from that celebrated rampart having passed through that part now enclosed within the domain, occupies the rising ground in a spacious park, comprehending a circuit of twelve miles. The building has been enlarged and modernised at various times, according to the taste of its successive owners, and is, therefore, in some respects deficient in unity of design and strict architectural keeping. It is, however, a superb modern edifice, spacious as the hospitality of its noble owner, and looks to be the palace of some luxurious Roman. Within sight is the broad lake, with its island of oaks in the centre, containing three specimens of extraordinary growth, shadowing their gigantic figures in the clear waters. Herds of bounding deer were scouring the park in all directions. The thick forest that crowded the hollow, and climbed the banks of the rapid Dee, was full in view, with the red flag of England waving merrily in the wind from the top of Waterloo tower, announcing the presence of the princely owner in the family hall of his ances-

tors; and far beyond were the riven rocks, looking like fragments of a ruined city, and the enormous chain of the Berwyn, stretching itself like a huge leviathan in a sea of clouds.

Wynnstay possesses some fine pictures, principally portraits, by Vandyck, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Sir Godfrey Kneller, of whom it has been said by Walpole, "that, where he offered one picture to fame, he sacrificed twenty to lucre." How unlike that glorious father in the art, Apelles, who, when he was rebuked for his tardiness, replied, "I paint for perpetuity!" Adjoining the house is the building formerly devoted to theatrical entertainments, at the Christmas revels, in which Sir Watkin usually took a part.* But Thespis has resigned the honours of her mimic reign, and the *speculum vitæ* is exchanged for one of the most substantial acts of real existence. In September annually is held, in this same building, an agricultural meeting, at which takes place a liberal distribution of prizes, which is succeeded by an agrestian fête of the most hospitable character, and finally wound up, at a late hour, by the mazes of the dance and the festivities of the ball room.

The road from the hall stretches acros the park, and then creeps down through a shady dingle by the side of a murmuring brook, till it again ascends and opens out upon Belen Tower. This building was erected in commemoration of the Cambrian legion, which served with so much credit in the Irish rebellion under the command of Sir Watkin. It rises from a square stone court surrounded with battlements, and comprehends the most magnificent and picturesque view that can be presented to the eye. On one side are the Ruabon hills, and the delicate line and fairy arches of Pont Cysilltau

* In an old play bill of the year 1780, announcing the performance of *The Constant Couple* and *Bon Ton*, Sir Watkin is put down for the characters of *Tom Errand* and *Davy*. A curious print accompanied the announcements, of which a reduced *fac-simile* is given as a tail-piece at the end of this chapter.

clearly defined, with the Vale of Llangollen spreading far away before the sight. The dark conical hill on which stand the giant fragments of Dinas Bran with its towering background of limestone rock, rises abruptly at one point; and on their left stretches the booming line of the Berwyn range which completely shuts in the view. Near the park the winding Dee makes a horse shoe bend, and pursues its majestic course through the dingle of the Marten which lies immediately before the beholder.* The river rolls its turbulent tide through a deep ravine hollowed out of the precipitous rocks. Its banks rise into cones, or spread into heavy lines, clothed from the summit to the verge of the stream with the foliage of the forest. All around was a warm and luminous atmosphere, and the broad woody masses were lighted np with the force and vigour of those rich contrasts which the declining year had brought upon them. The local colours of the objects were in harmonious keeping. The grey rocks blended with the tender tints of the falling leaves, and as the eye swept the beautiful perspective, it fell on the bosky vale and dark forest—on mountain, hill, and stream,—till the prospect faded away into mere atmospheric tones which preserved the hues while they veiled the objects from distant vision.

The interior of the tower contains in the centre a pedestal bearing a marble urn, and an Italian sarcophagus on the side. A tablet on the wall surmounted by a Roman cap, records the names of the officers and privates of the British Fencible Cavalry who fell in the war of the Rebellion, with this inscription underneath:—

"Thus lives the soldier's name who fought and fell;
Thus Cambria to her lastest sons shall tell

* This place has received this title from a species of lizard with which the neighbouring woods used to abound. It was this scene which produced such enchantment on the mind of the tasteful Lyttelton when he first observed it.

How her own bands,—her ancient Britons bore
Her dragon banner on Iernes' shore.
By courage, zeal, and discipline maintained
Her ancient glory which her sires had gain'd;
And true to honour, and their country's cause,
Sealed with their blood the triumph of her laws."

A circular dome crowns the tower, which bears within and without a bronzed wreath of oak leaves and goats' heads, designed by the pencil of Lady Delamere. From its elevated situation that "chartered libertine," the mountain breeze, blows upon it from all quarters, and by the disorder it produced amongst my tablets, I might have been writing in the celebrated "Hall of Winds" of classic land.

When I left Belen, the old lady who appears as the warder of the tower, directed me into the winding path which led through the thick forest I had just been looking upon, to the bank of the river. "Keep the side of the stream as your guide," she said, "and avoid every inviting path that would take you to the uplands," I did so, and following the good lady's advice to the letter, soon found myself on a track more full of beauty, at least of its kind, than I ever had traversed before. The road which was broad enough for a carriage, and in most parts in excellent order, traced the margin of the sounding Dee, embroidered on each side by overhanging woods, sometimes gliding majestically along over its deep even channel, and again tumbling over jagged rocks with the roar and force of a cataract. I was the only traveller upon this path, and no sound was heard to break the peculiar solitude of the place, except my own step, the hoarse stream, or the companion-note of the wood pigeon. Every one who has seen the masterly pictures of Robson, illustrative of the wilds and heathy hills of the Scottish highlands, must have felt the power which that artist possessed in producing the impression of extreme desolateness, by the introduction of a single subject of animated life in his landscapes. And so indeed I felt it, in relation to the solitude of this



place, when, after traversing a considerable distance through the forest shade in almost unbroken silence, I came suddenly upon a woodman's cottage, surrounded by the cheerful accessories of domestic life, with a happy group of rosy-faced children peeping at the stranger from a garden promontory, surmounted by luxuriant holyhocks serrated with flower-bells, as gay and blooming as the cherub countenances which I detected, laughingly, looking upon me. The path winds its tortuous course of nearly three miles and then issues out at the foot of New Bridge, from a magnificent lodge and gate belonging to the proprietor of Wynnstay. From hence is the mail road to the little village of Chirk, which I reached in rather more than an hour's travel, and took up my quarters at the Bloody Hand which exposes its red palm on the road-side at its immediate entrance.

In all my wanderings through the Principality, I had never seen any edifice in such excellent order as the church of this place.* It had been recently repaired and refitted by

* The well-known Dr. Sacheverell has been said by some writers to have been inducted into this vicarage, and, after a suspension of three years, to have been conducted back by five thousand of his parishioners in triumph. This, however, is a mistake, as his name appears only in the list of rectors of Syllatyn, a neighbouring parish. This notorious man "published two Sermons, one upon the Communication of Sin, an Assize Sermon at Derby, the other upon the Perils of False Brethren in London, in 1709; for both of which he was impeached and silenced three years, and the Sermons burnt by the common hangman in the presence of the Lord Mayor and the two Sheriffs of London and Middlesex. He became afterwards rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn, in the following manner:—When the impeachment was over, the ministry took very little notice of him, and treated him with great indifference; but, upon the rectory of St. Andrew's, Holborn, being vacant, the doctor applied to them for the living, but they had no regard to his solicitation. Upon which he wrote to Doctor Swift, with whom he had a very slender acquaintance, to request his interest with the Government for that parish, and set forth how much he had suffered for them and their cause. Doctor Swift immediately carried this letter to Lord Bolingbroke, then Secretary of State, who railed much at Sacheverell, calling him a busy, intermeddling fellow, a prig, and

the parish, at an expense of £2,000.; and the quiet colouring of the walls,—the old carved pulpit and reading-desk,—the rich pannelled oak ceiling,—all bore evidence to the taste which had designed and superintended its execution. The walls were adorned with some chaste and beautiful marble tablets in memory of different members of the Duncannon family. There is one also to the celebrated Dr. Balcanqual, the favourite of Charles the First. This singular man had drawn upon himself the hatred of the Scotch Covenanters, by whom he was considered as a spy and an incendiary. In the Civil Wars which desolated this unhappy reign, he had taken refuge from the popular fury at Chirk Castle, where he died on Christmas day, 1645. There are also several splendid monuments to the different members of the Myddelton family, remarkable for the purity of their materials, truth and beauty of design, and exquisite execution.

The churchyard is spacious, and has a congregation of tombs and monumental stones. Eight venerable yews, that bear the chronicle of centuries on their aged trunks, and have themselves been gazed upon by generation after generation of living men, spread their funereal shade over the

an incendiary, who had set the kingdom in a flame, which could not be extinguished, and therefore deserved censure instead of a reward. To which Swift replied, 'true, my Lord; but let me tell you a short story. In a sea fight, in the reign of Charles the Second, there was a very bloody engagement between the English and Dutch fleets; in the heat of which a Scotch seaman was very severely bit by a louse in his neck, which he caught, and stooping down to crack it between his nails, many of the sailors near him had their heads taken off by a chain shot from the enemy, which scattered their brains and blood about him. Upon this he had compassion upon the poor louse, returned him to his place, and bid him live there at discretion, for, as he had saved his life, he was bound in gratitude to save his.' The recital of this put my Lord Bolingbroke into a fit of laughter, who, when it was over, said, 'The louse shall have the living for your story,' and soon after Sacheverell was presented to it."—*Supplement to Swift's Works, in* 1779, *Vol.* 2.

graves of the departed. A churchyard like this is always suggestive of deep reflection. The mural mementoes tell of those, who once "lived, and moved, and had their being" in this crowded earth, and the stranger is ready to lift up his voice and cry, "Where are they?" There is a satisfactory answer, not in the eastern echo, but in the "sure word of prophecy."

"Although from darkness born, to darkness fled,
We know that light beyond surrounds the whole;
The man survives, though the weird corpse be dead.
And He who dooms the flesh, redeems the soul."

A little below the village of Chirk is the aqueduct which conveys the Ellesmere canal across the valley and the river Ceiriog. It measures the length of two hundred and thirty yards, and then runs through a tunnel of nearly the same distance. It is built of stone, and consists of ten arches; the piers of which are pyramidal, rising sixty-five feet in height, and sufficiently broad to contain the channel of water and a convenient towing path. Before "mine host" of the Hand was out of bed, I was seated upon the stone bridge that clasps the river a little below the village, and in full view of the silver stream, and the green valley that opens its perspective through the arches of this beautiful work of art. After leaving the bridge, I turned to the right and gaining the level of the canal, soon stood upon the dizzy elevation of the aqueduct itself. The Ceiriog, that historical river, had often been the subject of my day dreams when my mind had been brought into connection with the stirring events with which it was associated. I saw it now for the first time rolling onward its unceasing current in these "palmy days" of peace, as heretofore, when hostile chiefs and princes pitched their tents upon its banks, and ensanguined its waters with the foeman's blood. I discerned through the mists of time the pennons of Albion and Normandy, of Guienne, Anjou, and Gascony, floating in the breeze, led by Henry of Eng-

land,* and on the distant hills the white camps of that congregated array which had poured from North and South of Wales, Powisland, and the district that stretches between the Severn and the Wye, awaiting, like men resolved, the dreadful struggle of victory or death. I recalled the onslaught of that self-devoted band, which stealing silently across this dark stream, fell upon the royal guard, and had nearly penetrated to the monarch's tent,—I followed on, and beheld the finger of Fate beckoning forward the serried lines of Europe's chivalry towards the strong mountain holds of the gallant Britons,—I heard the rattling rain of heaven pouring upon their slippery steps,—I marked the stealthy stratagems of the watchful foe,—I saw Famine and Slaughter brooding over the invading hosts. The thin mists from the hill tops could not have dispersed more fluently than did this mighty army, when the battle-cry of "St. George and Victory!" became exchanged for the hurried step of defeated men flying for their lives.†

The clarion of war was again sounded in Cromwell's time on these lovely banks. The battery of the Protector was levelled against Chirk Castle, and the fortress was finally taken, and in part demolished.

The view, looking down the stream, embraces the stone bridge, with its single arch clasping the breadth of the river, —the pleasant village and grey-towered church,—the hur-

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* The *soubriquet* of Court Mantle was given to this monarch, from his having introduced the Angovin fashion of wearing short cloaks, or mantles, into England. This costume succeeded to the Asiatic fashion of trailing garments and long sleeves, which prevailed from the time of William Rufus to that of his successor Stephen. Henry's heraldic cognizance of a *Fox with the tail dependent* was curiously symbolical of the arts he practised, and the defeats he sustained from the Welsh, and the manner in which he was frequently obliged to retreat from their country.

† Adwy'r Beddau,—or the pass of Graves,—commemorates that part of Offa's Dyke in this neighbourhood, where the bodies of the slain were buried.

rying river,—the thick forest, embracing circle after circle of green meadows, filled with flocks and herds,—and the distant hills of Cheshire and Shropshire composing the back ground. On the opposite side is the upper part of the little valley, which is bisected by the aqueduct, circumscribed by the picturesque rocks, and dotted with woody masses. The Berwyn range, which stretches westerly, shuts in the view in that direction, and the Ceiriog, winding round a forest headland, is lost sight of in the defile that skirts the castle domain.

The square form of Chirk Castle, with its bastion-like towers, appears at first a clumsy pile of building, but, as the foot of the visiter draws near, his eye takes in its architectural design and acknowledges its magnificence. The gateway in front leads through a massy tower into a broad quadrangular court, round which are ranged the different apartments, having a handsome colonaded piazza on the eastern side. The gallery contains a large collection of pictures and portraits, amongst which are those of Sir Thomas Myddelton, clad in armour, the great Duke of Ormond, and Sir Orlando Bridgman, in his robes. Near these are portraits of Lady Bridgman, and the Countess of Warwick, afterwards wife of the celebrated Addison. But the object of greatest curiosity in this collection is the landscape marino-piece, by a foreign artist, who, mistaking his direction to paint a flock of sheep, in connection with the waterfall of Pistyll Rhaiadr, in Montgomeryshire, has introduced a fleet of ships riding on a sea created by his pencil for their purpose, in the midst of dry land.* Chirk Castle, or Castell Crogen, as the former fortress on the site of which

* The painter felt himself nettled by the presumption of this direction, and replied tartly—"You want some *sheeps* in it? Well, well, I will put you some sheeps in it!"—And he accordingly painted the water as falling into the sea, with ships lying at anchor, close to the rocks.

it is built was called, stands upon a rising eminence, and is said to command a view over seventeen counties. It was erected in the reign of Edward the First, by Roger Mortimer, on whom the lordship was bestowed, and is intimately connected with the bloody wars which desolated this beautiful land up to the time of the Protectorate. The park is ornamented with groups, and single subjects, of trees, which would form study for the painter. I saw many trailing their b branches on the ground, forming a circumference of nearly three hundred feet. The magnificent iron gateway is the most celebrated piece of art in Great Britain, and is related to be the design and workmanship of a country blacksmith.



CHAPTER VI.

LLANGOLLEN—DINAS BRAN—VALLE CRUCIS—CORWEN.

How gloriously yon mid-day sun
Colours the hills and valleys of the earth!
How beautiful is Nature! Spirit dwells
In every golden ray of yon fixed light;
And bliss! the soul that cannot find it there
Was made for utter darkness, and would miss
Beatitude in Heaven.

Maturin.

THE grey mists of the morning, which had hung lightly on all the surrounding objects, pencilling them out into those varieties of form which composed with the dim features of the landscape, were now fast dripping from the wide world of leaves, or rolling away in broad folds, one over another, revealing the glorious scene of nature, richly emblazoned in all the heraldry of Autumn.

It was mid-day when I left Chirk, and retracing my steps along the main road for a short distance, I turned westerly from Newbridge, near which place the Ceiriog forms its junction with the Dee, and crossing the strait line of Offa's Dyke, wound my way near the base of Craig-wen and the grounds of Plas yn Pentre, to the elbow of the latter river, before it curves off in all the gladsomeness of its newly acquired freedom, and makes the circuit of Llangollen fychan.

On the left rose the huge summit of Cefn-uchaf; and on the right the cone of Dinas Bran pinnacled by the fragments of its ancient castle, with the last beams of the western sun bathing the hill side in a flood of light, as I entered the town of LLANGOLLEN.

A traveller forty years ago, after leaving this thoroughfare, remarks, "that it has but one tolerable inn, and of the accommodation at that the less is said the better." Time has, however, wrought wonderful changes here, as well as in other parts of the Principality; and there are now two excellent inns,—the Hand, which appears to be a favourite sign in this neighbourhood, and the King's Head. This little town is evidently in an improving condition; but like most other places in a transition state, it exhibits a motley mixture of old and new buildings, with their usual accessories of clean pathways and dirty streets. The church is an ancient structure, dedicated to Collen, a saint belonging to the British calender, from whom the name of the place is derived. It is in the second style of Gothic architecture, which prevailed till the time of Henry V., and possesses a beautiful ceiling of carved oak, two richly coloured paintings of stained glass by Eginton and Evans, and an ancient chased brass tablet to Magdalen Trevor, of Trevor Hall. The churchyard appeared to be kept in rather a slovenly condition, and contains but few monuments worthy of notice, except that to the Honourable Miss Ponsonby and Lady Elizabeth Butler, the ladies of Llangollen, as they were by way of distinction called, and their faithful servant Mary Caryll, which occupy one spacious tomb railed off and planted with yews.

Plas Newydd, for so many years the residence of the fair recluses of this lovely vale, stands on a gentle eminence close to the town, ornamented with a carved railing in front, and decorated with grotesque gables and ornaments. The present proprietors are also two maiden ladies, who seem disposed to perpetuate the conventual celebrity of this place; and are

certainly not less urbane than the former possessors, in permitting visiters to gratify their taste in the inspection of the beautiful grounds. Attended by my *ciccrone*, the gardener, I passed from one object of natural beauty to another,—the vale of Pen-gwern surrounded by part of the Berwyn chain, the woody dingle, and brawling brook of the Cyflymed, with many others, which are supplied with the most gratifying conveniences for their leisurely inspection. After all, I must confess, filled as was my mind by the impressions of the majestic scenes with which it had become familiar, the miniature landscapes supplied by the situation of Plas Newydd, fell far short of the anticipation I had formed, and they forcibly recalled the emotion I remembered to have felt after viewing the mimic hills and vales, and passionless cascades of the poet Shenstone, in his retreat at the Leasowes, near Hagley. It was not, therefore, without some degree of satisfaction that I descended the hill, threaded my way through the winding streets of Llangollen, and reached my comfortable quarters at the Hand Hotel, where the traveller fond of *cwrw da* will meet with it in perfection.

The bridge of Llangollen is an ancient structure, of the fourteenth century, and was erected by John Trevor, Bishop of St. Asaph. It is a beautiful, and, in some respects, singular specimen of pontile architecture, and consists of four pointed arches, resting upon triangular piers, the two smallest occupying the central position,—the entire fabric spanning the channel from rock to rock. The Dee, which is here a broad river, rolls its turbulent waters over a rocky bed, sometimes smooth and shelving, at others interrupted by insulated masses of rude granite, pouring its cold and ceaseless tide into a chasm of considerable depth, having a salmon-leap and weir below the bridge.

Castell Dinas Bran, or Crow Castle, as it is sometimes called from its elevated situation, is best approached from this side. The ascent is steep and difficult, rising upwards

of nine hundred feet above the level of the Dee, at Llangollen bridge. The hill is, nevertheless, covered with green sward, and, on the lower part, affords excellent pasture for sheep. The pleasant mansion of Mr. Drinkwater, a descendant of the celebrated author of the "Siege of Gibraltar," decorates the inferior slope, and his flocks graze on the mountain side. The shepherds' paths traverse the hill in all directions, and by one of these, cut in the steepest places with easy earth-steps, I reached the summit. The black shapeless ruins of the ancient fortress cover the crown of the hill, and, when entire, extended over a space nearly one hundred yards in length, and fifty in breadth. No date can be assigned to its erection, and the name of its founder is buried in the same oblivion. It is believed to be one of the primitive Welsh castles, and to have partaken largely in the changes and barbarous events of the feudal age. In the thirteenth century, Gryffydd ap Madoc, a person notorious for his injustice and oppression, was the Lord of Dinas Bran, and took refuge in this strong-hold against the wrath of his subjects. In the conflict, carried on by Owen Glyndwr, for the deliverance of his country, this castle was seized upon by that hero, and maintained as an important post in the bloody warfare that followed. The period of its desolation is as much a matter of obscurity as the date of its erection. In Elizabeth's time it is described by Leland as being dismantled, and the veracious chronicler relates a curious story in reference to it. An eagle of the species at one time common in Wales, was accustomed to come regularly every year to build her nest upon this rocky site. The bird's habit was observed by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and her nest was constantly deprived of the young. In perpetrating this act, the robber, when he was lowered down for the purpose, was obliged to shield his head from the vengeance of the parent bird by one basket, while he deposited the stolen eaglets in that in which he descended.

This eyry of the eagle was once the abode of one of the most celebrated beauties of North Wales, "the lovely flower of Trevor's race." She was beloved by Howel ap Einion Lygliw, who addressed to her an impassioned ode, descriptive of the state of his heart. This poet and his mistress are gone into the land of forgetfulness; but the ode was found written on parchment in the castle, and has been perpetuated in a spirited translation in the collection of the Rev. Evan Evans. The lady was cruel and the bard faithful. There are few visiters will stand among the ruins of Dynosebrane, as Churchyard writes it, without calling to mind Mevanvy Vechan,

> "The princely maid
> In scarlet robes of state arrayed ;"

or the forlorn lover, who has described himself as

> "Pale, with despair, and robb'd of sleep,
> Whose only bus'ness is to weep."

Nothing now is left of this historical fabric, but the broken walls by which it was once defended, the traces of that deep trench cut through the solid rock, by which its most accessible part was rendered impregnable, the remains of a small chapel used by the garrison, with broken towers and tottering fragments, the heralds of its former strength and power, which were, from their massiveness, apparently intended to be coeval with the "eternal rock" on which the fortress was built.

I stood amongst those frowning ruins—"the antiquity of life"—to look on the smiling vale spread in beauty beneath, and enclosed on all sides by gigantic rocks and towering hills, reared by the almighty finger of Heaven's own architect. The features of the landscape were the same as in days of yore, except that Peace had allured the happy flocks to graze upon her pastures, and Security, the child of Peace, had beckoned forth the husbandman to his labour, —to till the ground, and gather the orchard,—to sow the crumbling fallows, and reap the golden harvest.

"No eyes, but those of a poet, are worthy to behold the valley of Llangollen," says the author of "Modern Accomplishments." No one, indeed, but he, who looks upon nature with the impassioned eye of a lover, whose heart yields itself unreservedly to the sweet influences which its beauties and harmonies inspire, and whose spirit yearns after the bright pictures which have been traced upon his memory; who feels, as Bishop Hurd remarks, the fine accord that exists "between the world of sense and of soul," can sufficiently understand the ineffable delight which such a scene as that of Llangollen vale affords. On the left abruptly rise the bold and riven limestone rocks of Eglwyseg, and the heavy mountain chain which divides the fertile lands of Clwydd and Llangollen from each other. On the right, the bulky range of the Berwyn stretches its protracted lines, carrying the vision to its southern boundary near the Tan-nant. Gentle elevations and green slopes screen the mountain bases; while friths of verdure, through which flow the hill torrents, and deep glens and hollow defiles trace their varied lines on the face of the laudscape. Through the broad base of the valley the sportive Dee winds its sinuous course, here and there discovering its sparkling stream; the rich umbrage of the painted woods was reflected back from its bosom, and received in silent homage the sweet voice of its waters. Not a cloud overshadowed the clear blue sky: the bright beams of the sun lay basking on the earth's surface, gilding the mountain's brow, and throwing revelations of light into the depths of the valley. The classical fabric of Pont y Cysylltau, spanning the vale with its nineteen arches, and the numerous mansions, villas, and picturesque cottages dotting the landscape, presented a scene of beauty and of luxury upon which the eye delighted to dwell. The fields had not yet lost all their flowers,—the fox-glove and wild valerian sought the shelter of the ruins,—the variegated heaths surrounded the hill sides,—and those tribes of fern, that seem to inherit the Welsh moun-



tains as their home, bent gracefully before the breeze. The foliage of the trees, from the eminence on which I stood, lay level before me, and gleamed in the sheen of the sun like a meadow of bright colours, waving with the gentle wind into billows of light and shade, and even the bare slaty rocks gave back their purple hues to enrich the scene.

The ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey* lie about two miles from Llangollen, and a pleasant path it was that I had chosen to reach them. A stile on the right leads the visiter over a field's length or more from the road, and places him amidst the fine ash trees that veil the decaying remains of former greatness from the gaze of the passing traveller. Monachlog Llan Egwestl,—the church of monks in the valley, or the monastery in the valley,—was founded by Gryffydd ap Madoc Maelor, the son of that rapacious lord of Dinas Bran before mentioned, in the early part of the twelfth century, and its architecture partakes of the early English style. A beautifully arched doorway richly decorated, over which is a large

* This was a wealthy institution which may be judged of by the magnificent hospitality used by the monks, who are described by Owain as having the table usually covered with four courses of meat served up in silver dishes, with sparkling claret for their general beverage.

" Many have told of the monks of old
What a saintly race they were;
But 'tis most true that a merrier crew
Could scarce be found elsewhere;
For they sung and laughed,
And the rich wine quaffed,
And lived on the daintiest cheer.

" And the abbot meek, with his form so sleek,
Was the heartiest of them all,
And would take his place, with a smiling face,
When the refection bell would call;
And they sung and laughed,
And the rich wine quaffed,
Till they shook the olden wall."

window consisting of three divisions elaborately ornamented, surmounted by a circular arch, having above it a marigold or rose-light of the most exquisite workmanship, admits the visiter into the area of the building. The transepts, side aisles, and private chapels of the brotherhood, are easily made out, especially by the aid of the *cicerone* who attends the ringing of the entrance bell. The pointed arches and clustered pillars, with their rich mouldings and capitals, all attest the former magnificence of this place, and the profuse expenditure bestowed upon it. The stately east end, represented in the plate, is in fine preservation, and has three lancet shaped windows. The ample area is now usurped by a grove of splendid ashes, towering in pride far above the highest points of the ruin. Herds of kine graze within the sacred enclosure, and flocks of sable birds may be seen strutting amongst the fallen fragments, raising their notes of gratulation to their fellows.

"I doe love these ancient ruynes
We never treade upon them but we sette
Our foote upon some reverend historie."

The distance from the abbey to the pillar of Eliseg is only a few hundred yards, and when I was on the spot it stood in the midst of a turnip field. This monument is reared upon the centre of a slightly elevated mound, from a square basement, with its present mutilated shaft rising about eight feet in height. Its history is short. The pillar was erected to the memory of Eliseg by Concenn or Congen, his great grandson, and the descendant of the chief named Brockmail Yseithroc, who was defeated at the battle of Chester, in 607. In the civil wars it was thrown down by the iconoclasts of that age, who mistook it for a popish cross, and it remained in a broken recumbent condition for more than a century, when what remained of it was restored by the patriotism of Mr. T. Lloyd, of Trevor Hall, with a suitable inscription recording the fact. This monumental column stands in its loneliness within sight of the abbey ruins, nearly at the end of the little vale. On all sides rise those astonishing tiers of lime-

stone rocks which bear the names of Craig Arthur and Craig y Forwyn, or the Maiden's Crag, with opposing hills verdant and smooth, covered here and there with thick plantations of pine and larch. This narrow valley looks like a map of meadows, and seems to be the abode of peace and plenty. The Avon Eglwysegle runs through the ancient abbey grounds, which in former days used to supply the holy brotherhood with trout and pastime. The river still flows as fast and musically as heretofore; but the monks have given place, as Mr. Pennant rather oddly says, "to a race of warm and wealthy yeomanry, undevoured, as yet, by the great men of the country."

I turned my steps towards Llangollen by the road which leads through the mountains from that place to Ruthin, and approached the village just as the setting sun was tipping the skeleton fortress in rays, and playing with peculiar splendour upon the opposite and highest point of the Berwyn chain called Moel Geraint, or by the people of the country, the Barber's Hill, which rises immediately behind the town. The story goes,—and, indeed, from this story is dated the name of the place,—that a barber of the village, an associate of a desperate gang of ruffians, more than a century ago, in a fit of rage, murdered his wife, and this *head* of the mountain range was selected as a fitting place for his execution. As I passed this place I thought of old Sauval, the French chronicler, who, with all the vanity of his nation, has described Montfaucon as "the most magnificent gallows in Gaul," and wondered what the Ancient would have said, if he had seen Barber's Hill, with the gibbeted body hanging, as it did, day and night in irons, the first to catch the golden ray of the morning sun, and the last to detain his purple gleam shimmering around the felon chains that held the wasting skeleton.

The distance between the two places of Llangollen and Corwen is about ten miles. On the left, the undulating

range of the Berwyn stretches the entire length of the way, and on the right the broad stream of the Dee rolls through rich valleys, ravines of rocks, and woody dingles, with a sound sometimes musical and sweet as the shepherd's pipe "of Arcady," and then again murmuring hoarsely like the distant thunder. The great elements of majesty and beauty are congregated within this short distance. The mountains traversed each other in all directions, forming glens and hollows rarely trod except by the shepherd. The path of the mountaineer lightly traced in lateral and oblique lines amongst this region of hills, might be faintly discovered, connecting one secluded home with another; and here and there mansions adorned with architectural taste, or little hamlets displaying the fellowship of man with man, rose harmoniously beside the silver Dee.

Sychant, or more properly the woody eminence on which it stood, formerly the patrimonial seat of Owen Glyndwr, is on the right side of the road to Corwen.* Scarcely a vestige remains of the ancient building, but the foot of the traveller must needs wander to its highest point, which the hero, after he became the master of Dinas Bran, occupied as a signal station, and from which his scouts contrived to give him sure information of the manœuvres of his enemies. Of this last brave asserter of his country's rights it was said, "that he had a head to contrive, a tongue to persuade, and a heart to execute any mischief." But besides

* Owen Glyndwr was bred to the bar in Gray's Inn, and in the celebrated suit which he had with Lord Grey de Ruthin, defended his cause with surpassing eloquence, both in the English judicial courts and before Parliament. He died September 20, 1415, Et. 61, at the mansion of his son-in-law, Monington House, Herefordshire, in which chapel he lies buried. His sons fled into Ireland, where one of them settled at Dublin, and took the name of Baulf, or Paulf, upon him, which signifies a strong robust fellow, and became ancestor to one Bauff, a worthy citizen of Dublin, who lived in great plenty there.—*Willis's St. Asaph.*

these bold and dextrous qualities, which perhaps belonged, in part, to his education as a lawyer, he was a man of martial attainments, reckless courage, and contrived, as Sir Walter Scott beautifully writes, to invest himself with a sort of "barbaric grandeur," which, in connection with the national object he had in view, has thrown around his name an interest which will remain as long as the page of history is read. One of his chief bards, Gryffydd Llwyd, has sung of him thus:—

"Loud Fame has told thy gallant deeds,
In every word a Saxon bleeds;
Terror and flight together came
Obedient to thy mighty name;
Death in the van, with ample stride,
Hew'd thee a passage deep and wide;
Stubborn as steel thy nervous chest
A more than mortal's strength possessed."

Corwen, or the White Choir, as its name implies, stands cowering under the shelter of an elevated portion of the Berwyn, which rises immediately behind it. This place seems, notwithstanding its situation on the great Holyhead road, to have advanced very little beyond its primitive condition. It has, however, great historic interest, and was in past times the scene of many of the notable exploits of the celebrated Owen Glyndwr. The church is close behind the inn which bears the picture of that hero, and is both a sanctuary on the sabbath, and a school for every other day. The sacred edifice is dedicated to St Julian, archbishop of St. David, who is described as the "godliest man, and greatest clerk of all Wales." I lost no time in summoning the learned pedagogue to my aid, and soon became possessed of all the lore which the neighbourhood contained. The church, though an ancient building, has few of the relics of antiquity within its walls. Near it is an endowed building, which bears the pompous title of Corwen College,

but is in fact a benevolent institution for the widows of six clergymen, in the county of Merioneth, founded by Mr. Eyton, of Plas Warren, Shropshire.

In the churchyard is an ancient cross which, among the country people, has obtained the name of the Sword of Glyndwr, probably from its pointed shape bearing some resemblance to that weapon; and on the southern wall is the deep indented mark of a dagger, which from the same authority is said to have been thrown by that choleric chief from his observatory on the crag of Pen Pengwn, in dudgeon at the inhabitants of the village. This legendary spot was too attractive to be resisted. I therefore threaded my way among the cottages that line the lower part of the mountain, and skirting a young plantation that clothes the accessible parts of the rock, arrived, after considerable fatigue, at the stony seat from which this redoubtable feat was performed.

On the beetling brow of the cliff, stood a pillar of stones raised upon the rough layers of rocks, bearing the name of Glyndwr's Seat. Independently of the incipient desire which all men feel, in a greater or less degree, to connect themselves in some way or other with that which is in itself extraordinary, the view from the chieftain's prospect ground is so extensive and remarkable, as to offer an irresistible temptation to the visiter in this place. The silver stream of the Dee wound gracefully to the east, immediately below the terraced road that followed its sinuosities, along which, when I contemplated it, the mail was galloping, and the liveried guard was twanging his horn in announcement to "mine host" of the Owen Glyndwr. In front rose the circular wall, crowning the summit of a hill close to the village, on which was the ancient British fort of Caer Drewyn, where once stood its round tower in the centre now lying in complete ruins, forming anciently one of that strong chain of forts that reached from Dyserth to Canwyd. On the west the mighty

head of Snowdon pierced the heaven with a pavilion of clouds enrobing and veiling his awful summit. On the east the range of the Clwyddian hills, with the huge bulk of Moel Famau, pinnacled by the Rodney pillar; and on the extreme left dimly seen, the crowning head of Cader Idris and the Merioneth hills shadowing the beautiful valley and lake of Bala. Right and left reaches of meadow land lay peacefully beside the river's banks, which, seen from the lofty rock, looked like a bright thread carelessly thrown upon a sampler of green; while the circumjacent hills encompassed verdant recesses, sleeping silently, except when the crackling rifles of the sportsman awoke their voices, reverberating from hill to hill in babbling echoes. There is a saying common in Greece, that a man has no authorised pretensions to the character of a traveller, who has not smoked his pipe on Mount Olympus. I remembered it; and to accredit my claim as a wanderer in this land, I lighted my cigar, and sent the circling incense from the hero's chair of rocks.

The chapel of Rhug is worth a visit, and I paid one thereto. It stands at the distance of about two miles from Corwen, not far from the road-side, in the midst of a small field that bears no traces of having ever been used as a burial place. It is of very ancient date, with the pulpit and reading-desk on the ground floor, and the structure is more diminutive in form than any other edifice of the kind I had ever met with in Wales. The mutilated carvings and uncouth frescoes seem covered with the mould of time. The colouring had nearly all vanished, and the venerable owl which had taken possession of the cross beams of the unceiled roof, seemed afflicted with sulky uneasiness that a southern should thus have disturbed "his ancient solitary reign." Dilapidated as this little sanctuary appeared, it is used every sabbath day, and the English service is performed, which the young schoolmaster told me he regularly attended.

CHAPTER VII.

CERNIOGE—CERIG Y DRUIDION—PENTRE VOELAS—PASS THROUGH BETTWS-Y-COED AND BY CAPEL CURIG—NANT FRANGON.

> BEAUTIFUL is Earth!
> The lights and shadows of her myriad hills;
> The branching greenness of her myriad woods;
> Her sky-affecting rocks; her zoning sea:
> Her rushing, gleaming cataracts; her streams
> That race below, the winged clouds on high;
> Her pleasantness of vale and meadow!
>
> *Barrett.*

SIR John Price observes in his account of Cambria that "North Wales is the strongest country within the isle, full of mountains, craggy rocks, great woods, and deep vallies, strait and dangerous places, deep and swift rivers." In this description the worthy baronet has, however, omitted to mention the morass and moor, which form no inconsiderable part of the scenery of both divisions of the Principality. Some of the moors stretch along in almost interminable tracts, with scarcely a tree to offer an obstruction to the winds of heaven that sweep over the melancholy waste,—where silence and sterility seem to reign, except when interrupted by the short shrill scream of wild birds, or varied by the waxen beauty of the many-coloured heaths that afford them shelter. There are also those black turbaries, crossed by walls of peat, piled up by the inhabitants for their winter fuel, along the sides of which glimmer the pitchy waters of the dark morass from which they have been dug; sometimes, indeed,

made more gloomy by heaps of mawn, standing like solemn apparitions on the verge of deep pits, which before embowelled them—fearful places these, where the unhappy traveller, on a moonless night, might sink in hopeless misery, never to rise again except at the judgment day. It was upon such a heathy tract as this, of which I have attempted to form the picture, that I entered, after passing the first two or three miles of natural beauty that lingers in the vicinity of Corwen. In this case, however, the monotony of the scene was unexpectedly broken when I reached the romantic bridge of Pont y Glyn. The river rolls its noisy waters through a single arch, resting upon two nearly perpendicular rocks, rising about sixty feet, and which stand at the head of a woody glen, surrounded by beetling cliffs, intermingling their grey, unchangeable, weather-beaten features with the transitory foliage that blooms and declines with the revolving year. The cataract dashes down its precipitous channel amidst a halo of foam, which wreathes its way among the gaily coloured branches that kiss the stream in soothing tokens of amity, and, passing through a deep and richly wooded ravine, is afterwards seen quietly pursuing its course, and enriching the vale below.

On my way to Cernioge, I turned off to visit the remains of a building on the mountain of Pengwerwyn, about a mile from the miserable little village of Cerig y Druidion,* where,

* Though there is nothing now remaining at Cerig y Druidion to detain the traveller, the place was once famous for possessing several specimens of the British *cistoaen* or stone chest. The largest of these was composed of seven stones nearly seven feet high, and a yard in breadth, four of these were placed perpendicularly, two on each side, and the other three were employed to secure the two ends and the top. They are supposed to have been employed by the Druids as prisons, and this one bore the title of Carchar Cynrig Rwth, a great tyrant who used to place his hapless victims in the space formed by these stones. There are abundant remains of ancient British superstition to be found in this neighbourhood.—*Camden's Brittannia.*

tradition says, Caractacus had a castle, in which he was betrayed by Queen Cartismandua, and sent prisoner to Rome. Here he delivered his well-known oration; and his noble appearance and dignified conduct produced such an effect on Claudius, that he set him at liberty.*

Pentre Voelas is a small village on the high road, from whence the traveller may make pleasant excursions to the Conway waterfalls, and the interesting district around Yspytty Evan and Hafod Evan. The former place was once a hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, the asylum of the persecuted, of travellers, the needy and the oppressed, under the guardianship of the old knights who held the manor. But soon, like the best-meant institutions, falling from its original uses and good purpose, became, on the extinction of the order, the prolific source of the evils it was intended to remedy.

A walk of two or three miles over the same moorland district, brought me to the pleasantly situated inn at Cernioge, and having previously heard of the excellence of this house of entertainment I resolved to rest myself for a day or two.

* In the writings of *Tacitus* will be found a detailed account of Caractacus. On being placed before the tribunal at Rome, he delivered himself in the following manner:—'If to the nobility of my birth, and the splendour of exalted station, I had united the virtues of moderation, Rome had beheld me, not in captivity, but a Royal visiter, and a friend. The alliance of a prince descended from an illustrious line of ancestors; a prince whose sway extended over many nations, would not have been unworthy of your choice. A reverse of fortune is now the lot of Caractacus. The event to you is glorious, and to me humiliating. I had arms, and men, and horses; I had wealth in abundance; can you wonder that I was unwilling to lose them? The ambition of Rome aspires to universal dominion; and must mankind, by consequence, stretch their necks to the yoke? I stood at bay for years: had I acted otherwise, where on your part had been the glory of conquest, and where on mine the honour of a brave resistance? I am now in your power; if you are bent on vengeance, execute your purpose; the bloody scene will soon be over, and the name of Caractacus will sink into oblivion. Preserve my life, and I shall be, to late posterity, a monument of Roman clemency.'

This place had a decidedly English appearance, for in the yard were four large ricks of hay, (an extraordinary sight in Wales) extensive and well-built stabling, and the arrivals and departures were so frequent as to keep up the bustling excitement of a high thoroughfare. There is a large pool in the neighbourhood, called Llyn Cwrt, well-stocked with trout, and eels, which afford excellent sport to the angler. The land about Cernioge Mawr is the highest between London and Holyhead; and the moors, abounding with grouse, present extensive but unvaried and barren prospects, with scarcely a tree or shrub to break the dreary scene.

The repose I had enjoyed at Cernioge had prepared me to resume my Wanderings, and to fulfil an engagement I had made with a gentleman to inspect the slate quarries of Mr. Pennant in Nant Frangon. I took my way towards the beautiful village of Bettws-y-Coed.* It did not fall within my plan to make any stay in this picturesque neighbourhood until I had visited Bangor and Anglesea, I therefore pursued my way, which lay by the course of the fretful Llugwy, which has its spring on Carnedd David, towards my resting place for the night at Capel Curig.

On the following morning, at an early hour, I was at the appointed place of rendezvous—the road inspector's cottage by Llyn Ogwen. Situated in the very gorge of the craggy and beetling heights, and now restlessly heaving under the gusty winds of Autumn, which came whistling through the mountain hollows, the aspect of the lake, with the sweeping falls of the Benglog, had a strangely wild and sombre appearance, and produced a corresponding feeling in the mind. It was a combination of the picturesque and terrible, not unsuited in its sternest mood to the genius of Salvator. Had the foot of Wilson penetrated these grander recesses of the Caernar-

* A faithful representation of this place is given in a plate at page 2[illegible]2 of this volume, and a description of the village and the scenes in its vicinity.

von hills, the noble taste of that enthusiast of nature must have seized some of its striking features. Here darkly rushed the river of the lake; and there the antique bridge, the wooded abyss, the picturesque coloured rocks, and the Trifaen, with its giant-semblance of the human features; and through the terrific chasm below, the Ogwen,* pouring in three foaming cataracts down heights of above a hundred feet into the green spreading meadows below. No one can fully imagine all these landscape features strangely, yet harmoniously, blending into one grand picture,—each calculated to rivet the eye of the painter,—clothed in the rich variegated hues of the hour and season in which I then beheld them.

In no part of the magnificent Holyhead road was I so much impressed with the savage and romantic character of the scenery, as on my route towards Bangor, near the tremendous glen of Nant Frangon,—the "Hollow of the Beavers." By descending from the road a little way, the view presented itself full of picturesque grandeur and beauty,—the lower part of the vale combining features of the splendid and the terrific. Huge masses of rock strewed the foreground; the narrow patch of green meadow overhung by lofty mountains; the bright river meandering towards the sea; the waters of the lakes rushing down the steeps, with the distant prospect, and the gloomy horrors of the mountains far around me,—spite of the genius of improvement, and the triumphs of

* The river and the romantic falls on the Ogwen both spring from the same lake, which is wild and picturesque in the extreme. It abounds with eels, and in a peculiar and excellent kind of trout, of a bright yellow while in the water, and a fine salmon colour when cooked; and lucky is he, who after a hard day's walk, obtains a dish of them No where, for a short period of the season, can the angler select better sport; and the use of a boat may occasionally be procured. The bolder botanist, too, may, with equal advantage and delight, explore the region of the Glyder hills. They abound in rare plants, heaths, and mosses, and among the latter is the *Lichen Islandicus*, found so useful in pulmonary and other complaints.



science on every side,—left upon the mind an indelible impression of this wild region of the British Alps.

Agreeably contrasting with the more savage features of this picture, I observed the elegant *cottage orné* of Ogwen Bank, surrounded with plantations, near the rudest site of this romantic valley. But, however bleak in external character, commerce, within late years, has in reality transformed these mountain-wastes into sources of industry, private wealth, and public prosperity. Under the auspices of the Penrhyn family, and their intelligent successor, Mr. Pennant, taking advantage of every new discovery, the vast property on which I now set foot had been nearly doubled in value; and I found the surrounding population, who were formerly steeped in penury and ignorance, supplied, not only with the means of livelihood, but of true civilisation.

Proceeding through the entrance gates, leading to Ogwen Bank, the road is continued over an elegant bridge of one arch, the river presenting a rugged and picturesque scene.* The extensive slate quarries just beyond, are conducted on an enlarged scale, with admirable facilities afforded by railways and the improved modes of working, and seem to have wrought almost a magic effect along the great high roads, covering the surface of the soil no less with commodious houses than with labourers' huts,—with rising towns and hamlets. Nor was I less interested by the ingenuity shown in the construction of the mills, and the different processes conducted on the nicest principles of mechanical science, particularly in respect to the manufacture of the various kinds of slates in domestic use, and for architectural, and educational purposes. No one can behold these works without admiration of the powers of British skill and industry. I was informed that upwards of two hundred tons of slates are daily

* Persons travelling between Bangor and Capel Curig can order their vehicles to be driven through Mr. Pennant's slate quarries, which adds only another mile to the distance.

conveyed by the railway from the quarries of Cae Braich y Cafn, in Nant Frangon, to Port Penrhyn, near Bangor; and that nearly two thousand workmen have constant employment.

These quarries will amply repay the trouble of the visiter who inspects them. The number of inclined planes, pumping engines, extensive galleries, formed one above another, labourers hanging by ropes in their hazardous employment, or standing on little ledges of rock, with the loud hum of busy life and industry, in every direction, while the startling blasts which occur every four or five minutes, reverberating from hill to hill, carrying their sound like the voice of thunder into the deepest mountain recesses,—altogether make up a picture that seems raised by enchantment, especially when contrasted with the grim solitude around.

On my way along the mail road, almost a continued descent between the hills to Bangor, I was surprised by the rapid increase of population and domestic dwellings on the line of the mountain-quarries within the last twenty years, and by the marks of improvement and intelligence spreading on every side. One serious drawback alone presented itself, in the endless number of public houses, "thick as autumnal leaves," strewn over the labouring districts. Every tenth house in some places, Bethesda not excepted, could boast its sign, from "Uther's Dragon" and "Prince Llewelyn" to "Glyndwr's Head" and the "Meredith Arms," giving a ludicrous and grotesque appearance to the abodes such as could not but excite a smile. In a moral view, at least, these miners' cottages, with their gaily bedaubed lures to intemperance, looked more like "painted sepulchres" than the dwellings of peace and labour. A mission of one or more of our Temperance Societies would find occupation in many parts of North Wales.

I had during the day passed through a succession of mountain scenery the most solitary, wildly beautiful, and magnificent that could be viewed,—where towering cliffs rose almost perpendicularly to a height that baffled the eye to

look upon, which now and then rested on objects as pleasingly contrasted, conveying feelings of relief and repose to the mind. The sun was setting in calm and beauty; on one side appeared the grey marble towers of Penrhyn Castle, rising boldly above the surrounding wood, and on the other rolled the waters of the Menai, with the Anglesey hills in the distance, while upon my extreme right, the mountains, expanding into a bold curve, placed the base of Penmaen Mawr in full relief.

The characteristics of the sublime and beautiful in natural scenery must necessarily be dependant upon the geographical peculiarities of countries; but it rarely happens that in any one nation is combined such striking examples of both these pictorial elements as are to be found in Wales; except perhaps, those remarkable lands that lie on either side of the Alps, or that distinguish the course of the Rhine. The boundless levels of shifting sand that belong to Arabia and Northern Africa, over which no measuring line has passed, where the sun rises and sets scarcely resting upon any object of animated life, except the track of that "ship of the desert," the patient all-enduring camel,—the elevated table lands of Mexico and the Caraccas,—the pampas and savannahs of Southern, and the prairies and forests of Northern, America, — are individualities of these elements; but they do not interchangeably mingle in the same country with the milder and more subdued forms of Nature which at every turn meet the wanderer in the Principality. Wales, too, is a land of history, and it is this circumstance which gives an indescribable charm to every mountain and valley, every defile and river, which no other country in the same degree possesses.

Let the reader imagine this wild and terrific pass of Nant Frangon, filled with hostile troops, debouching out of the thick forest, which formerly extended from its head to the city of Chester, and moving in long lines amidst its savage solitude,—the pennons of many tribes, gathered

from the shores of the Mediterranean, and the provinces of Gaul and England, floating in the breeze,—echoing through its length to the clarion notes of distant nations,—made vocal with the strange sounds of foreign tongues,—and clattering under the tramp of Europe's mailed chivalry. Let him look upon the mountain's top and rocky ledges, which frown over this ancient defile, and descry the priests and bards of this primitive race,—hoary in years and majestic in stature,—clad in azure robes, with flowing beards and hair-locks white as the snow of their own mountains, and holding the symbols of their sacred office,—brought, like the prophet of Pethor, to "curse this people." Let him look upon the shaggy brows of these old precipices,—into the hill-recesses and stony caves,—and see them bristling from top to bottom with the infuriated Britons, ready to pounce upon the ruthless invaders of their native land. Let the reader realize this and much more, and he will form a picture, imperfect, indeed, both in outline and filling up, but which, like a shifting panorama, actually unrolled itself upon the road upon which he may have imagined himself travelling, and continued its exhibition from the times of Henry II. to the conquest of Cambria under his descendant, the first of the Edwards. The words of the Spanish ballad might have been arranged on purpose to form the scene and action of this strange picture:—

"Trumpets in the distance sound,
  Flags are waving in the breeze,
Horses stamp the echoing ground,
  Troops are 'midst yon ancient trees;
Panting for the fight they come,
  Breathing fury—seeking war;
  Dost thou ask me who they are?
Wouldst thou know each warrior's home?
  * * * * * * * *
  Let them come, and thou shalt see
  How we meet them manfully."



CHAPTER VIII.

PENRHYN CASTLE—BANGOR—THE MENAI BRIDGE—CARNARVON—ACROSS THE MENAI TO ANGLESEY, AND BY NEWBOROUGH TO HOLYHEAD.

BEHOLD yon fortress rising
  Aloft in midway air,
'Tis not a Marcher's biding,
  But Pennant's mansion fair.
All hail, thou Castell Penrhyn!
  May abundance crown thy board!
Strike up, ye bards, the telyn;
  Give joy to Penrhyn's lord.

Popular Song.

PENRHYN CASTLE, the seat of G. H. Pennant, Esq., is within an easy walk of Bangor. The princely estate of Penrhyn comprehends a large portion of the parish of Llandegai,* which extends above fifteen miles from the straits of the Menai into the Snowdon hills. The present mansion is supposed to have been erected on the site of a former palace, which belonged to Roderic Molwynog, a prince of Wales, who flourished in the eighth century. It experienced the usual fate of such edifices in that barbarous age, and was

* The church of Llandegai is built in the Gothic style, having the form of a cross with a tower in the centre, and crowns an eminence above the banks of the Ogwen. It is supposed to have been erected in the reign of Edward III. Besides the monuments to the Lord Keeper and Archbishop Williams, it contains a beautiful tribute to the late Lord and Lady Penrhyn, the work of Westmacott.

razed to the ground in the tenth century, and again rose in splendour in the time of Henry the Sixth. Commemorated by bards of old, as well as in modern song, the ancient palace, the castle, and the present structure, are alike associated with interesting events and recollections.

> "Abode of ancient chiefs, of bards the theme,
> Here princely Penrhyn soars above the stream;
> And, phœnix-like, in rising splendour drest,
> Shews on its wide domain an eagle crest."

The example of the late Lord Penrhyn has not been lost upon its present possessor; and to the numerous alterations and improvements already made, Mr. Pennant has added all that is requisite for the completion of a splendid baronial residence. The whole is constructed on a magnificent scale, in the boldest style of castellated architecture, chiefly from designs by Hopper, ably blending with its ancient Saxon and Norman orders all the modern interior accommodations and comforts. The new edifice, built of grey Mona marble, presents an extensive range of buildings, surmounted by lofty towers, some of which are circular, while the keep,—in which are the domestic apartments of the proprietor,—and another of the principal towers are square, with the addition of angular turrets. Partially screened by surrounding woods of the most luxuriant growth, through the extent of which the Ogwen winds its way to the sea, the effect, as it is approached, is at once picturesque and imposing; and the elegant and superb character of the internal decorations, chiefly upon a ground-work of the finest marble, corresponds with its outward magnificence.* The whole of the accessories, the lodges

* Among the other heirlooms of Penrhyn is to be seen a *hirlas*, or drinking horn, of the hero Piers Gruffydd, in the shape of an ox's horn, ornamented and suspended by a silver chain—curious as a memorial of ancient manners. The initials of the chief's name and family are engraved on it. Piers Gruffydd owned the Penrhyn estate in the reign of Elizabeth, and joined the fleet of Sir Francis Drake, in a vessel which he purchased and equipped at his own cost. He was afterwards in the gallant action with the Spanish Armada.



and entrances to the park, with its walls and massive gateways, are on the same extensive plan, the walls comprising a circuit of not less than seven miles. An elegant chapel, hot and cold baths upon the beach, outbuildings, &c., altogether serve to convey the idea of some royal establishment, rather than the quiet abode of a wealthy commoner of Great Britain.

The situation of Penrhyn Castle certainly stands unrivalled. Occupying the summit of an insulated hill, which on one side sweeps down to the coast, it commands views of the bay and town of Beaumaris, Bangor, the greater part of Anglesey, with Priestholme Island, the Great Orme's Head, and Penmaen Mawr. On the other, it gently descends to the base of those gigantic hills that compose the Carnarvonshire range, in the midst of which Snowdon rises with majestic splendour.

Bangor, consisting chiefly of one long winding street, is not so much distinguished for the beauty of its external appearance, as for its numerous local advantages and attractions, affording a continual variety of country and sea excursions.* The city is of great antiquity, a bishopric having been founded in the sixth century. The prospect from the rising ground, about half a mile distant, called Garth Point, where a ferry boat plies to the Anglesey shore, presents a rich combination

* In addition to the many interesting objects which before engaged the attention of visitors, a number of new roads and pathways have more recently been opened for the greater accommodation of the public. As regards commercial business, at the egress of the river Cegid into the Menai, lies Port Penrhyn, now capable of admitting vessels of many tons burthen. The Quay is upwards of three hundred yards long, and an immense tonnage of slates is shipped from it to all parts of the world. The Penrhyn Arms, at Bangor, is a very large establishment, and with the other excellent accommodations for the public, leave nothing to be desired by the most fastidious traveller. What a contrast to the place as described by Dr. Johnson in his visit to this town in 1774! The Penrhyn Arms is built on an eligible site, at about a quarter of a mile east of the city. From the windows at the back of the house, and from the lawn and shrubbery, are fine views of the surrounding scenery, including a wide expanse of the sea.

of every variety of coast and mountain scenery; extensive sea views, and landscapes picturesquely intermingled with towns and villas; castle towers and spires far and near, giving an agreeable relief to the general open character and sublimity of the prospect. On the left, the Anglesey coast, with plantations and pretty cottages—the church and castle of Beaumaris,—the beautiful bay covered with vessels,—Baron Hill, the seat of Sir R. W. Bulkeley; and far to the north-east, Priestholme Island, and the variegated green sea; to the right, the Great Orme's Head stands prominent, extending its rugged bulwark into the sea at the entrance of the Menai straits, and Penmaen mountain; while to the south-east, tower the hills of Snowdon,—altogether offering a *coup d'œil* of extraordinary scope and grandeur.

The Cathedral of Bangor has often been fully described. In its architecture it does not correspond with the ideas raised by its ecclesiastical rank. The body of the edifice is spacious and plain, and is used for the performance of the ritual in Welsh. The chantry, transept, and chancel are exceedingly beautiful; and many monuments sacred to affection, and some bearing interesting historical records, ornament the walls of the latter. Its history must be nearly coincident with the place to which it belongs. Ban-côr, (the high and beautiful choir) now modernised into Bangor, is an etymology which intimates the celebrity its chantry enjoyed in ancient times. Its full rich choir, in undiminished excellence, still pours the tide of harmony through its ancient aisles; and the pilgrim, who like me has found his Sabbath rest near this city, will have his mind and heart deeply engaged in the service, should he listen to the exquisite anthem of Purcell, *We thank thee, O Lord;* or the touching requiem of Dr. Calcott, *Blessed are the dead*, as it was my privilege to do during the several times that I worshipped in that venerable place. The Welsh morning service concludes at eleven, and the English commences in half an hour afterwards. The native congregation is large,

respectable, and devout. Very soon after its departure, I entered the cathedral, and was struck with the singular spectacle of the beadle hurrying from seat to seat with a large mop in his hand, which he seemed to exercise with a precision and dexterity which could only be the result of long habit. I enquired the cause, and he told me that the Welsh indulge themselves so much in the practice of spitting in all directions, that it was absolutely necessary to take that mode of cleaning the place after every native service. The serious countenance of the worshippers which I had just witnessed in solemn assembly, and the beadle with his mop, offered an admirable illustration of the proverb, that "the sublime and the ridiculous lie very near together."

The see chiefly owed its wealth and immunities to Anian, a bishop who lived in the reign of Edward the First, and who appears to have been a court favourite, for he had the honour of christening the first English Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward II. The loss of its temporalities, confiscated during the wars of Henry III., was subsequently more than retrieved by the enormous grants of land, manors, and ferries lavishly bestowed by the Royal conqueror, when he added Wales to the crown of England, but at the expense of the vanquished chiefs and people. In the cathedral several Welsh princes and bishops were interred; the tomb of Prince Owen Gryffydd still remaining in tolerable preservation.

Bangor furnishes a central situation from which the traveller may radiate in all directions, both by land and water, in exploring the beauties of the surrounding country. Within a moderate distance lie Aber, Conway, Nant Frangon, Ogwen Pool, Capel Curig, Carnarvon, Beaumaris, Amlwch, Plas Newydd,* affording the happiest interchange of scenery;—and in immediate connection the port, the castle, and the

* Each of these interesting places are described in this work; by reference to the Index at the end of the volume they will readily be found.

island; the yawning slate and stone quarries pushing their advances into the very bowels of the hills, and the mountain back-ground overtopped by the lofty peak of regal Snowdon.

It has always been my humour, when I have examined all the objects natural, artificial and historical, which can engage a stranger's eye, to leave "the pent-up city," and bend my steps towards the open country; and, if I can find such an one, to throw down my scrip in some hospitable way-side inn,—like that of Aber, in its garden of roses and tulips; or that of the George, at the Menai Bridge, standing, as it does, in a grove of flowering chesnuts, within sight and sound of the dashing stream, and nearly at the base of its wonderful bridge.*

* The George, in imitation of places of greater pretension, has its record for visitors. Amidst many a verse both grave and gay, and in many a foreign tongue, are the following lines:—"Two strangers, in search of health amidst the hills and valleys of this ancient land, were brought by the Zephyr steam packet to this lovely spot, on the 25th of May, 1839, a day long to be remembered for its serene beauty; but more especially for the many mercies which a kind and gracious Providence infused into their cup of life.

"We saw the glorious orb of day
At early dawn, in pomp and power,
Light up the city's crowded way,—
Gleaming o'er every fane and tower.

We saw that bright and glorious sun
O'er Mona's wave fling his broad beam;
And, e'er his destined course was run,
Shed his last ray on Menai's stream.

Father, thy guiding hand *we* see,—
That hand which dug the channels deep
Of all thy waves, thou mighty sea,
And bade thy tides their courses keep.

That hand which toss'd yon hills on high,
And gently spread this living green,
Call'd up *our* thought, and form'd *our* eye—
Father, in all thy hand is seen!"

The western sun was glittering on the towers of Penrhyn Castle, when I retraced my steps along its verdant grounds towards Bangor. I followed on through its continuous street, and skirting the walls of the venerable cathedral to the right, I soon found myself on the gentle eminence that winds along, amidst banks of wild violets and strawberries, in a parallel direction to the stream, till I reached my resting place at the George, about two miles from the city. I had spent a day of sunshine, and the last beams of that same sunshine were gleaming upon the broad waters, or, converged by some interposing eminence, appeared like "a glorious path of rays," leading, as the poet would finish the description, to "some bright isle of rest;" however, in reality, the sheen of that path stretched right across to the fertile lands of Mona's Isle.

The Menai Straits are about twenty miles long, and the public are accommodated by ferries at different points, the widest of which is that from Beaumaris to Aber. This little village stands on the Carnarvonshire bank, at the terminating edge of Penmaen Mawr, closing up the glen through which the mountain path from Llanrwst opens out upon the great Conway road. It was the first time I had been at the Menai since it became enriched with those peculiar attributes upon which my eye at this moment rested. Before me rose that majestic bridge, the wonder of the world, and the triumph of human art, which has attracted men of all climes to look upon its enchantment. Through its broad arch and open piers, the clear blue stream marked the undulating line of the Carnarvonshire coast, fringed and wooded to the water's edge, followed in all its evolutions by the gracefully corresponding lines of the isle of Anglesey. Passengers on foot or horseback, with carriages of every description, were perpetually crossing the bridge, and from their elevation appeared very much like the diminutive mimic figures in a mechanical theatre; and, indeed, bore an amusing resemblance to them in their

attitudes and paces. The flower-loving bees, after a day o. industry and wealth, were flitting through the air, humming their drowsy song, and the blackbird and thrush, with which this region seemed to abound, were trilling their melodious vespers to the majesty of the setting sun, the visible lord of their enjoyments. The steamer that sails daily between the straits and the port of Liverpool, lay, as if spell-bound, in the midst of the river; while here and there, in every direction, little skiffs and sailless boats were gliding silently to their home coasts, stealing like single thoughts, or solitary reflections, to the home of the soul in the calm twilight hour.

The first stone of the Bridge was laid in 1820; one of the main chains was carried over in 1825, and it was opened in 1826. The distance from centre to centre of the pyramids of masonry which suspend the bridge, is five hundred and eighty feet; rather more than the width of the straits at low water, but considerably less than the width when the tide is up. It appears considerably more than one thousand feet in length. The under side of the roadway is about one hundred feet above high-water mark, so as to admit the passage of the largest vessels which usually navigate the straits. Two saucy Americans, however, of more than ordinary size, were advised in passing to accommodate their towering ensigns to its height, but they refused to bow their republican *royals* to any thing of English creation, and the stern bridge bore them away before they were allowed to carry their vessels underneath. Last summer some daring swimmer, in the neighbourhood, jumped from the chains, which are elevated about twenty feet above the bridge, into the centre of the stream, which is at this place seven fathoms deep, and repeated the experiment the same day, head first, without injury. In the hurricane of last winter, this bridge suffered severely, and for nearly a week neither the mail, nor any passenger, could pass over it. The storm came on in the evening of Sunday, roaring with tremendous fury through the chains, which, though at least



fourteen feet asunder, rattled and swagged together with the flexibility of a thread, striking out masses of fire at every vibration. About two o'clock on the following morning it raged with the greatest violence, and near upon that time a large portion of the centre arch burst with a tremendous crash, and if the gale had continued with the same force a few hours longer, the whole of that part must have fallen together into the boiling waters beneath. During this same storm, which did considerable damage in the neighbouring port of Bangor, it is said, that a new schooner lying there broke from her moorings, and without a single sailor on board to guide her, flew before the wind, threading the channel of this dangerous navigation, and arrived safe and undamaged in the port of Liverpool.

The view from the bridge northward, commands the course of the straits reaching to Beaumaris Bay, and far beyond, till the prospect is lost in the misty distance. Every where within the sphere of vision, this bright stream appeared covered with craft of all size; some skimming the water with their white sails set, like birds upon the wing,—others gliding gently along, impelled by the rowers, whose dripping oars, sparkling in sunshine, seemed like the outstretched fins of some of the tribes of the deep. Looking from the same point in the opposite direction, the eye rests upon a beautiful mansion, with the lawn sweeping nearly to the water's brink on the left. Within the stream is seen the Swelly Rocks, a dangerous place at high water for the mariner; and farther on, occupying the centre of the straits, the famous fishing island of Ynys Vadog; still farther are seen the grounds of Plas Newydd, among the plantations on the island border, with the pillar crowning the heights, erected to commemorate Lord Anglesey's participation in the glory of the day of Waterloo. All beyond and around is the sweep of richly variegated groves and plantations, covering the base and climbing the slopes of the bordering hills—the bright river—

the rocky, picturesque foreground—villas, spires, and towers here and there enlivening the prospect, with the giant bridge clasping the opposing banks, appearing together more like the work of some great magician than the result of man's skill and industry.*

An intelligent tourist,† in his *Guide to Snowdonia*, presents the following graphic account of a visit to this monument of the genius of Telford:—"Having landed, by means of boats, upon the Anglesey side, we pròceeded to the bridge, the visiting of which is a new era in the lives of those who have not before had that pleasure, and is a renewed luxury to those who have seen it again and again. Our party walked over the bridge slowly, because there was something to be admired at every step:—the effect of a passing carriage; the vibration caused even by a hand applied to the suspending rods; the depth to the level of the water; the fine view of the Straits in both directions; the lofty pillar erected in honour of Lord Anglesey; the diminutive appearance of persons on the shore; the excellence and strength of the workmanship; the beauty of the arches over the road through the suspension piers, and the echo in them,—all conspired to delight and to detain us. Many of our party went down the steep bank to the foot of the bridge, from which point, certainly, the best view is to be had of the whole structure, inasmuch as by being in contact, as it were, with its proportions on *terra firma*, a better idea can be formed of its real and, indeed, wonderful dimensions. We actually lingered about the spot, careless of time, or of

* "Beneath the Suspension Bridge across the Menai Straits, in Wales, close to one of the main piers, is a remarkably fine echo. The sound of a blow on the pier with a hammer is returned in succession from each of the cross beams which support the roadway, and from the opposite pier at a distance of five hundred and seventy-six feet; and, in addition to this, the sound is many times repeated between the water and the roadway."—*Sir John Herschel.*

† Mr. John Smith.

aught but the scene we were contemplating. There is so much magnificence, beauty, and elegance in this grand work of art, that it harmonises and accords perfectly with the natural scenery around, and though itself an object of admiration, still in connexion it heightens the effect of the general view."

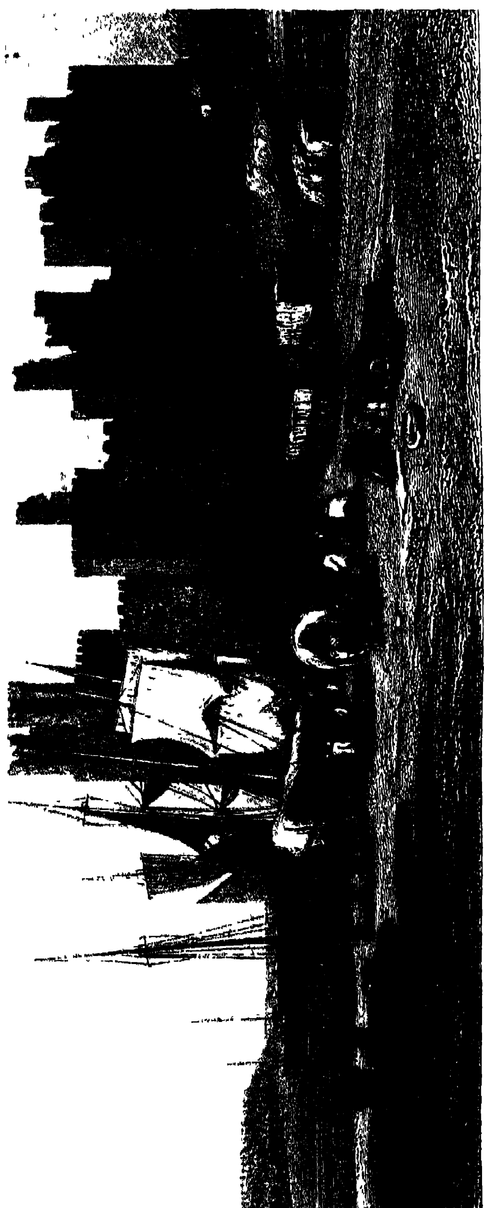
The road to Carnarvon branches off from the bridge in a southerly direction, forming, in some parts, the base line to the semicircular figure of the winding stream. The distance is only eight miles, and it is familiarly known as the *old road* in distinction from the more modern, and less picturesque, route from Bangor. There is a comfortable little resting place for pedestrians, called the "Half-Way House," at Port Dinorwic, from whence a railway runs to the quarries, near Llanberis lake. In journeying onwards I was presented with a combination of striking objects, under the varying lights and shadows of a rich and lovely evening, which made my entrance into Carnarvon, without reference to its ruined and magnificent castle, as new and pleasing as if I had then beheld it for the first time. The grey twilight, half shrouding its massive bulwarks, as I drew nigh, gave an air of vastness and gloom to its wide-spreading walls and heavy towers, which, with the silence of the hour, the far misty bay, and the dimness of surrounding objects, had a peculiarly mournful and imposing effect.

Caer-yn-Arfon (or the strong-walled town opposite to Anglesey), as Carnarvon was anciently called, is supposed to have arisen from the proximity of the famed *Segontium* of the conquering Roman, whose site was not far distant, and whose inhabitants very probably became transferred to the new and rising town. The remains of this station are less than half a mile from Carnarvon, where some fragments of walls may still be seen, on an elevation above the river Seiont. When Giraldus made his tour in 1188, *Segontium* was a place of considerable note.

CARNARVON is built on a peninsula, formed by the Menai on the west and north sides, and by the Seiont on the south. It was formerly enclosed by walls, defended by a chain of round towers, which on three sides are still nearly entire. In former times there were but two gates through which the inhabitants passed, but other openings have been more recently made to form communications with the suburbs, which are rapidly extending. The Town Hall is over one of the ancient gates of the town.

A Terrace, extending from the quay to the north-end of the walls, offers a delightful promenade, and presents a variety of interesting objects around the port, which is daily rising into greater importance by receiving and dispensing the fruits of industry and commerce. This Terrace, Mr. Bransby observes, possesses the powerful recommendation of being always clean, and of soon becoming dry after heavy and continued rain. From this walk to behold the sun on a calm summer evening, as he goes down "in a paradise of clouds" behind the Anglesey hills, is to witness one of the most lovely and glorious spectacles in nature. On an eminence called Twt-hill, near the Uxbridge Arms Hotel, is a most extensive and varied panoramic view, including part of the Snowdonian range,—the isle of Anglesey, with its plains, farms, and villas, backed by the mountains of Holyhead and Parys,—the swelling Menai,—and the blue and spacious bay, with the sea stretching far beyond.

The Harbour and the Pier have both undergone very great improvement, and ships of considerable burthen can now come up along-side the quay. An extensive trade is carried on with Liverpool, Dublin, Bristol, Swansea, &c., besides a lucrative coast trade, exchanging the invaluable mineral substances of this part of the Principality for timber and other articles. Slates are brought here as to the general depot from the quarries about Llanberis and Llanllyfni; and the country people of all ranks resort hither, as the best and cheapest market, from a considerable distance.



The Market-House, erected by the corporation, the Uxbridge Arms Hotel, by the Marquis of Anglesey, a number of excellent inns, among which stand foremost the Goat Hotel and the Sportsman, with hot and cold baths, and a billiard room, render the modern town as pleasant and commodious a place of residence as the most fastidious nabob,—to say nothing of hardy Welshmen and pedestrian ramblers,—could possibly desire.

Carnarvon is resorted to as a bathing place, and by invalids seeking health and amusement, for a temporary residence. There are here the advantages of a genteel neighbourhood as well as salubrious air; and the rambler in quest of romantic scenery frequently makes this town his head quarters. Besides many pleasant walks and rides in the immediate vicinity, within the circle of a dozen miles, are the Menai Straits as far as Bangor, Llanberis, Snowdon, Plas Newydd, and Beddgelert, offering not only inducements to those in search of the picturesque, but affording a source of continued gratification to the botanist, mineralogist, and antiquary.

The parish church of Carnarvon is at Llanbeblig, and stands in its loneliness at the distance of half a mile to the south-east of the castle wall. It is a structure of great antiquity, and contains the altar tomb of Sir William Gruffyd (a member of the Penrhyn family,) and Margaret, his wife. The knight mailed in armour, and the lady in the full dress of the age, are sculptured in white marble, and lie side by side. English service is performed in a chapel of ease at Carnarvon, close to the castle; but in this venerable little place the service is conducted in Welsh. The churchyard exhibits the peculiarities which give such a touching interest to some of the burying places of the Principality. Flowers of all colours, but especially snowdrops, violets, and pale primroses, display their beauty and expend their perfume on the graves of children, and maidens "that die unmarried," —while branches of the box, arbutus, and laurel, with shrubs

of a firm and sombre hue, mark the resting places of the more matured in this "City of the Silent."

For its ample and magnificent feudal structure,—almost terrible to the eye,—Carnarvon is indebted to the first Edward, who raised this colossal castle—as if in derision of the poor tenure of all sovereign power—near the ruins of the great Roman station. Soon after his conquest, Edward began the stupendous pile, which served less to overawe the Welsh than for a magnificent ruin and a modern wonder. The remains of Segontium furnished part of the materials, bright grey limestone, of exceeding durability, was brought from Twr Celyn, in Anglesey, and grit-stone, for the windows and arches, from Vaenol, between Carnarvon and Bangor.

Vast, irregular, and more shattered than its exterior grandeur would lead us to suppose, this giant-fortress stretches far along the west of the town, its broad spreading walls being surmounted, at intervals, with octagonal towers. The extent of the courts, the gateways, and the towers, bear equal witness to those noble proportions which astonish the modern architect, as from its Eagle-turrets he commands the whole of its magnificent area, and the wide sweeping circuit of its walls.

Opposite the massive Eagle tower, in which the unfortunate Edward II. was born, is the Queen's Gate,* which had two portcullisses that communicated with a drawbridge across the moat. Over the embattled parapet are seen the turrets

* So called from the circumstances of Eleanor, (daughter of Ferdinand the Third) the consort of Edward, who was brought, through the inclemency of a hard winter, to bear a prince for the Welsh,—having first entered the castle through this gate. At this time the castle was entirely insulated, on one side by artificial means; the moat was destroyed by being filled up two or three centuries ago, which somewhat detracts from our estimate of its former impregnable character.

"Edward had annexed Wales to the kingdom of England, but the Welsh were displeased with this usurpation, and determined to yield no obedience to any prince but of their own nation and language. Edward thought of an expedient

rising majestically above the solitary ruins, bounded on two sides by the water; the third bears traces of a large ditch; on the north-east side is a deep well, nearly filled up, with a round tower contiguous to it, apparently the ancient dungeon. The exterior, and especially the main entrance, has an air of forlorn grandeur, blended with massy strength, which must at all times excite admiration and awe in the beholder. The area within is irregularly oblong, and was divided into an outer and inner court. The external walls of the castle, enclosing an area of great extent, are nearly as perfect as when they were built, and of considerable height and thickness. The engraving of the entrance to the castle conveys a correct idea of its appearance at the time, collected from the most authentic records by Mr. Cattermole.

The state apartments appear to have been spacious, commodious, and handsomely ornamented; the windows wide, and enriched with elegant tracery. The form is polygonal, though the exterior of the edifice presents a complete square. The floors and staircases are considerably injured—in many places wholly demolished. A gallery extended round the entire fortress, to serve as a means of communication in times of danger, and during a siege. It lay close to the outer walls,

for cozening them. He ordered Eleanor, in the depth of winter, out of England to Carnarvon Castle, there to lie in. Edward then summoned all the barons and chief persons throughout Wales to meet him at Rhyddlan, to consult about the welfare of their country. He told the Welsh nobility that they had often wished for a prince of their own country, who might rule over them. They promised to allow of such an appointment, and to obey such a personage. Edward then mentioned *his own son Edward*, recently born, maintaining the terms of the engagement to have been strictly complied with, for his son was born in Wales, could speak no English, and his character irreproachable. Though born in 1284, it was not before he had reached his 16th year that Prince Edward received the reluctant fealty of his deluded subjects. The eldest sons of the English monarchs have subsequently been styled Prince of Wales, and, independently of birth, been created so by letters patent."—*Nicholson.*

and was provided with narrow slips, adapted for stations, from which to annoy an enemy with arrows or other missiles as occasion might require. But its time-worn and ivy-covered bulwarks are now fast yielding, like the interior, to the assaults of time. Some years ago the Eagle tower, struck by lightning, was split down several yards from the summit, giving it still more the aspect of a splendid ruin.

It was evening, as I before said, when I first caught sight of the castle. The sun's disk had sunk below the horizon, but his refracted rays still played upon that imaginary line "which parts the day and night," casting an attenuated melancholy grace over the crumbling fortress. I lingered amongst those ruins till the last vestige of light was withdrawn, except such as is bestowed by a clear blue firmament emblazoned with burning stars. As I gazed, the phantoms of history passed rapidly before my mental eye, with an order and truth like unto the facts treasured in her pages, and with a realizing illusion that converted me into an actual spectator of the scenes. From the topmost point of the Eagle Tower a prophetic voice seemed to issue, dispelling the delusion that in those days clung to the hearts of the stricken Cambrians, that their own-loved Arthur would again appear to raise up their fast-falling nation to its former glory. I saw the stern conqueror buckling on his armour, after the Easter Festival, resolute to conquer or exterminate the defenders of that ancient land. I heard the wailing of that dark and stormy night of Palm Sunday, when the strong hold of Hawarden fell before his victorious sword. I tracked the line of march his countless legions took through the deep forest, reaching, in ancient times, from the confines of Cheshire to the mountains of Snowdon, leaving Flint and Rhuddlan still frowning in their perilled rear; and I looked upon the picture of that onslaught at the bridge of Moel-y-don, when an English knight was seen buffetting the waves of Menai, and alone escaped to tell the tale of national vengeance. The pano-



rama shifted, and another pictured page discovered that gallant prince, the last of his race who held the sceptre of the Cymri, slowly retreating before his haughty foe into the mountain holds hard by,—dispirited, though not despairing,—cursed by the priest whom Edward brought to curse him,—deluded by the soothsayer, whose prophecy bore "a double sense," too fatally fulfilled in his own person,—deserted by many of his friends,—and his affianced wife basely held a captive in the hands of his enemy. The scene then moved; the undaunted hero still struggled with his fate, once the sovereign of the whole land, now only lord of the five baronies of Snowdon,—goaded by the insults of his mean conqueror,—maddened into open war,—betrayed by his base confederate lords,—and perishing alone and defenceless in the solitary recesses of a wood. Such was the strange eventful story; and that castle which marked the triumph of the conqueror, and the subjection of the people—which heard the infant cries of the first English prince of this cheated land—which opened wide at midnight its gates to troops of warrior knights belonging to an alien country,—which rung again and again with the rude revelry of that barbarous age, when the pageant and tournament of Nefyn was ended,—and which in the days of its strength, passed into the hands of foes, and friends, and fratricides,—that castle in its gaunt ruins, yet remained as the monument of these records, and the tomb in which past ages silently slept.

I had often heard of the sublimity of the scenery on the western coast of the island of Holyhead, and I longed for a ramble among its rugged and weather-beaten rocks. This district has been little noticed in Guide Books, and is out of the regular track of tourists; indeed the island of Anglesey, which has to be traversed in order to reach it, is flat and uninteresting compared with the neighbouring county of Carnarvon. This circumstance has, doubtless, had the effect of deterring many persons from visiting this place, and con-

templating the grand marine views around Caer Gybi, and the south-western shores of Anglesey, between Aberffraw and Llanfaelog.

After enjoying myself a day or two at Carnarvon, I proceeded across the silvery Menai towards Holyhead. It was morning: the mist and broad shadows were fast receding before the glories of the rising sun; the mountain sheep and cattle were creeping higher up the hills, while all nature smiled around. After reaching an elevated station, I turned and again looked upon the range of the mighty Snowdonian mountains, which, at that moment, appeared even more majestic through the white vapours which rolled around them.

Not being able to procure any satisfactory information about the tracts along the coast that I was desirous of exploring, I walked through a bridle road till I came to a miserable inn, where I was dissuaded, on learning the difficulties of the way, from taking the route by Aberffraw;* I therefore proceeded to Newborough, and over the Maldraeth Sands to Llanbeulan, near which village I entered the high road to Holyhead.

* At Aberffraw the princes of North Wales had a magnificent palace, in which they occasionally resided during several centuries, down to the time of the unfortunate Llewellyn.

CHAPTER IX.

HOLYHEAD—SOUTH STACK LIGHTHOUSE—ALMWCH—PARIS MOUNTAIN—BEAUMARIS.

> Let us go round,
> And let the sail be slack, the course be slow,
> That at our leisure, as we coast along,
> We may contemplate, and from every scene
> Receive its influence.
>
> *Rogers.*

Following the direction of the veteran Pennant, to obtain the most extensive view of the remarkable town and islet of Holyhead, I bent my way to the summit of the mountain of Caer Gybi, accompanied by the friend I had before accidentally met with in Carnarvonshire. It was that same Caer Gybi on which anciently stood the Druidical altar of sacrifice, and where afterwards arose an encampment for the conquering Roman, of which there are still sufficient fragments left to point out the figure of its enclosing wall. At every step I observed evidences of the rapid increase of this once poor fishing village, as Holyhead might formerly have been called, now spreading on every side, and supporting an active and flourishing population. From the summit we had a complete view of the promontory, and could mark its varying breadth and inequalities, and its storm-indented figure. It was approaching the hour of high water, and I could distinguish the lashing of the waves upon the precipices which

tower sublimely above the ocean; and the scream of the sea-birds, sailing around the tremendous caverns open to the waters, might be distinctly heard.

Far below me lay the Pier on the island of Ynys Halen, with the Lighthouse at the extremity; the harbour with its vessels and smaller craft in different stages of preparation; and close to the quay, the Post Office packet busily preparing for immediate sail. I was struck with the singular wildness and variety of the prospect far over sea and land; the vast expanding waters—the Skerry rocks—the lighthouses, and other objects of interest, opened out on every side perspicuously to the view.

After having breakfasted at the Royal Hotel, where I had taken up my quarters, I walked to the pier, and was just in time to see a superb steamer dart boldly forward, like some ocean-bird upon its wings, on her trip across the channel. There is something almost startling in looking intently on that strange unconscious power which produces the results of living motion, with a beauty, majesty, and rapidity of action, without any approach to violence or hurry: it is at such moments that the light of modern science appears almost too dazzling to the human eye. Having occasion to make some enquiries, I addressed myself to an elderly gentleman, who was standing near me, and who replied with such frank good nature and apparent intelligence, that I was induced to make myself known to him. He proved to be the Harbour Master, Captain Evans, who obligingly offered to show us the Lighthouse on the Pier, and promised every facility in his power for our inspection of the public works, &c. I shall not easily forget his good nature and kindness, still less the true British hospitality and obliging attentions which he shewed us during our stay. I cannot look back to those days without an emotion of grateful pleasure; which I feel it the bounden duty of a Wanderer, so kindly received by one to whom he was previously unknown, to put upon record.

My attention was next directed to a capstan of great power, for the use of the Government packets and other vessels. The former have never had occasion to employ it; but many large ships, by the aid of a plentiful supply of warps, have been brought into the pier during heavy gales, evidently snatched from destruction by the prompt assistance thus rendered. On the south side of the harbour I noticed a fine graving dock admirably constructed, and one of the first in England. There was also a diving-bell vessel at work on the south pier, blasting rock under water; a most useful invention, by which all the pier wall has been erected in deep water. The anchorage ground outside the harbour, having been so much choked by use that the anchors would not hold, several vessels were in consequence lost. In 1831, a very strong chain of three hundred feet in length was laid down across the entrance; so that when a vessel now drags her anchor before the gale, she drives forward until she grapples the chain. This plan has been the means of saving a number of vessels, and none have been on shore in the harbour since it was adopted.

At the entrance of the Pier, which extends one thousand feet in length, and was built by Mr. Rennie, is a triumphal arch, raised to commemorate the visit of his late Majesty, George IV., in 1821, on his way to Ireland. The King held a levee on board the Royal yacht, and proceeded on a visit to the Marquis of Anglesey, at Plas Newydd. Being detained on his return by boisterous weather, his Majesty left the yacht, and embarked in the steam packet Lightning, commanded by the unfortunate Captain Skinner,* in which

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* This gallant officer was washed overboard in an almost unaccountable manner, while standing on his own vessel speaking to one of the sailors, who was carried away by the same wave with his captain, and both instantly disappeared. I was informed that the weather was not very boisterous, and that the accident was one of the most extraordinary ever known in the annals of naval experience.

he proceeded across the channel. The monument of that estimable and noble-spirited officer is now to be seen not far from this very triumphal arch; and I could not pass by it, on entering the Head, without reflecting on the solemn and sudden visitations of Providence, as exemplified in his untimely end.

The morning was now calm, the waters smooth and bright; but I pictured to myself the advantages of the Pier Lighthouse when the storm is up,—when the glorious beacon sends forth its refulgent beams through the blackness of the tempest on the dark winter nights. It is built of Moelfre stone, a kind of marble, on an inverted arch, its base being six feet above high water; and contains twenty lamps and reflectors, exhibiting a strong white light in every direction, elevated fifty or sixty feet above the sea. I noticed a lamp and reflector, placed opposite an aperture twenty feet below the lantern showing a red light. This is not seen by vessels until they have cleared all the rocks outside, when it at once appears, and the vessel alters her course, and runs for the Pier head with confidence. In thick weather the packets are guided by signal guns and bells, which are so well arranged that sometimes the Pier Lighthouse has been the first object seen after crossing the channel from Dublin.

For want of a more extensive area of shelter, and deeper water, great destruction of shipping has occurred on the rocks outside by vessels endeavouring to reach the Pier. A plan has been proposed to make an outer harbour, sufficiently spacious to admit a man-of-war at all times. This would be a grand improvement; for the bay presents a fine spacious opening, one half sheltered, with lights on each side of its entrance. It is, moreover, centrally situated in St. George's Channel, in the track of all its trade; and presents the only station from the Land's End to the Clyde, on the east side of the channel (excepting Milford) to which vessels can approach when the tide has considerably ebbed.

Being a fine day I determined on inspecting the South Stack, an insulated rock, situated about four miles from Holyhead, on which a conspicuous Lighthouse has been erected, through the zeal and ability of Captain Evans.* Our little pinnace, with its white sail, and manned by four stout seamen, was soon waiting to convey us on our cruise. The atmosphere was clear, and the weather calm, but accompanied by those sudden fresh breezes which are so frequent in our island home. The boat bore off the coast to the distance required, drawing nearer the rocks, or receding at pleasure, to gain as full and varied a view of the scene as possible. In wildness and stern grandeur of aspect, no place, assuredly, can surpass this portion of the Anglesey coast. About midway of the voyage we proceeded with great difficulty; calm as it appeared, owing to the strong currents, we were soon obliged to lower sail, and take to the oars with long and strong pulls.

As we advanced, the grand promontory with its towering

* The traveller by day, who, in his passage up or down channel, nears the eastern shores, must have observed a white tower, posted, like a sentinel, on the brow of a low hummock, apparently forming a projecting ledge from the seaward base of Caer Gybi, or the mountain of Holyhead. On approaching still nearer, he will perceive that this hummock is, in fact, an island, torn from the main mass, but connected therewith by a link, at a distance resembling the gauze-work of a gossamer, which, in its fall, had accidently caught upon the corresponding projections of the disjointed rocks. Let him look a little longer, and he will now and then detect minute objects passing to and fro, and come to the obvious conclusion, that this aërial pathway is neither more nor less than a connecting ladder of accommodation formed by the hand of man. The speck by night, the white tower by day, with its hummock and fairy bridge, comprise what is called the South Stack; and, taken altogether, it forms a prominent feature in the bold, romantic scenery of this iron-bound coast, and combines so many objects worthy of notice, natural and artificial, that be the observer what he may, poet, philosopher, mechanist, or naturalist, he will find wherewithal to excite his curiosity, and reward his labour, in visiting a spot which has not many rivals in its kind in the wide world.—*Blackwood's Magazine, Feb.* 1831; "*South Stack,*" (Ascribed to Dr. Stanley, Bishop of Norwich.)

precipitous cliffs—its magnificent caverned rocks, and bleak indented sides, appeared to the utmost advantage. The effect, as we drew nearer and nearer within the verge of these tremendous caverns, was appalling. At least, when we came under the black shadows of the superambient rocks, and approached the dismal chasms, and heard the wild plaintive cry of the sea-birds, wheeling above our heads, it was impossible not to feel sensations equally unexpected and solemn. Grand receding arches of different shapes, supported by pillars of rock, formed by the incessant action of the waves, which, in stormy weather, roll with terrific violence against this high and rocky coast, exhibit a strange magnificence—a wild and savage beauty, mingled with a dread repose which continues to haunt the imagination even after quitting the scene. Seated among the rocks, or whirling in airy circles above and around us, I saw the various birds which seek these solitary abodes. I could not look upon them without an interest seldom inspired by the tamer species: whether curlews, gulls, razorbills, guillemots, cormorants, or herons, there is something wild and eccentric in their habits and appearance, which produce ideas of solitude and freedom; for we feel that they are not our slaves, but commoners of nature. On one of the loftiest crags, I observed what I took to be a peregrine falcon,—one of those feudal warriors who has survived his fame, no longer the companion of courts and courtly halls.

There are few objects more interesting than the appearance of the South Stack, when approaching it from the water. Its wild site and deserted air,—the lighthouse towering seventy feet in height,—the neat, comfortable buildings close under its guardian wing,—the sounds of life and industry mingled with the lashing of the sea, and the cry of innumerable birds, circling above and around, were altogether of so unwonted a character, that had I been suddenly transported to the antipodes I could not have felt more unfeigned surprise: and



when, having ascended its steep and rocky stairs, I gazed from the summit of the lighthouse on the wilderness of waters far around, and, descending, entered the quiet pleasant retreat which the master has established here, and saw the neatness and comfort of every thing, I began to think I was perhaps only reading too abstractedly some old fairy tale. But Captain Evans soon convinced me to the contrary by introducing me to an excellent dinner, in which there was nothing dreamy or unsubstantial, though it appeared, indeed, conjured from the vasty deep! During the afternoon I amused myself in scrambling down the South Stack to the water's edge—in observing the myriads of gulls standing on the ledges of the rock, or flying about in all directions—in examining the suspension bridge—and scaling the towering acclivity above, from which the island and lighthouse appear but diminutive objects; while the ever-varying ocean was enlivened by numerous vessels passing up or down the channel.

The suspension bridge which connects the South Stack Rock with the Head, was formed in 1827, at the suggestion and under the superintendence of Captain Evans. It is over a chasm nearly one hundred feet in width, and built on the same principles as the Menai—two chain cables passing across, firmly fixed in the rocks on each side. It is five feet wide, and seventy feet above high-water mark. Before its erection, to see the lighthouse, persons were wafted over the abyss in a kind of basket, which was also used for the purpose of conveying the necessaries of life in stormy weather.

Leaving the Holyhead mail, upon which I had again commenced my route, at the island side of the Menai Bridge, I approached Beaumaris by the fine road which the public owe to the munificence of the late Lord Bulkeley. There is nothing, perhaps, which embellishes a country, or allures visitors, or reciprocates the advantages of one locality with

another, so much as convenient roads; and of all those over which it has been my lot to travel, in my wanderings through this land of marvels, there is none which possesses such bountiful attractions as this. The road describes the line of the stream which flows through the strait, and gracefully occupies the high ground immediately above the beach, stretching from the rock which holds the caverned bolts of the Suspension Bridge, to the beautiful bay on which stands the gay and busy watering-place. Let not the reader suppose that it is at all like the bare and dusty thoroughfare that connects one place with another in the midland districts of "merry England;" but let him trace its windings with me, first amongst the rose-encircled cottages and villas that cluster in companionship near the bridge,—the bald rocks and planted picture islands round which the water circulates at flood-tide, with every verdant nook animated by the presence of man, or goat, or grazing kine,—and then let him gently glide into the green plantations, and beneath the overhanging trees, that will feed his eye and "calm his feverish brow" to the very close of his journey. But there are other and manifold beauties to engage the wanderer's eye, and detain his foot, on this enchanting track. It was spring, refreshing spring, almost blushing into summer, when I first visited it; the air was ringing with the wild melody of birds, proclaiming in all the "concord of sweet sounds" that their own laughing season was come at last,—the banks were decorated with a profusion of primroses, violets, and wild strawberries; and the stately foxglove, and blue bells of rare size, and rarer hue, held their court in the upper slopes of the woods.

Cadnant, a modern seat, rears itself amongst a rich plantation of pine and larch to the left, towering high above the little creek that runs inland at this spot; while on the right, Glan Menai, Craig y Don (or the wave's rock, as it means), and Glyn y Garth, enriched with the thick blossoms and yellow pendants of the white lilac and laburnum, look out

upon the sparkling waters, comprehending within their view the point bearing the latter name, Bangor, Penrhyn Castle, and stretching onwards to the Great Orme's Head, with the smiling lawns and majestic hills of the Carnarvonshire coast. This beautiful drive is, in many parts, cut out of the solid rock, and throughout is skirted by a stone parapet wall, along and over which the glossy-green ivy and other verdant parasites have trailed their wiry branches.

A stone bridge, clasping a mill-stream that runs its bustling current into the broad bay, leads the traveller into the ancient town of BEAUMARIS. I entered its precincts expecting, at every step, to meet with those gabled and grotesque buildings which characterised the taste of our ancestors, and those ample porches which gratified their social dispositions, in which the elders of the land delighted to meet at eventide; but no such thing,—the domestic dwelling of the villain and the landowner, of the vassal and his lord, that used to cower in the olden time round its fortress for protection, had all, or nearly all, disappeared; but in their places, the verandaed villa, the inviting lodging house, and the gay and long-extended terrace, spread themselves out before my sight. Beaumaris (or the *Beau Marais* of former days) has been converted into a fashionable bathing-place, where idlers in search of pleasure, and multitudes in quest of health, resort to invent and find perpetual amusement, or to recruit exhausted strength and spirits. When I was contemplating the motley group that sauntered away the morning on what is called "the Green,"—a projecting shore of fine filtrating gravel, covered with short grass, which forms one of the horns of the bay, and has become, from its healthy and attractive situation, the mall of the place,—I turned to the waiter of one of the hotels that was standing hard by, with my usual enquiry to such a sagacious and discriminating personage, on like occasions:—"Why, Sir," he said, "this is the place where the *Reg'lars*, as we call them, and the *Short-allowance Gen-*

tlemen turn out, the one to walk themselves into an appetite for the forthcoming-meal, while the latter stand looking upon objects which they have seen for a thousand times before, that they may deceive themselves into forgetfulness of such a thing, and make *one* meal answer for *two*."

"Well, but, my good friend," I replied, "I do not comprehend your distinctions: what do you mean by the terms you apply to those gentlemen, both active and passive?"

"Why, Sir," he rejoined, "I suppose you have not been in Blue Morris* before, or you would have understood me. You must know, then, that the party before you taking so many Berkeley strides, as if, like the Colonel, they were walking for a wager, are the *Reg'lars*, who pay by the week for all the meals the day will afford, and they are preparing themselves for the bell that will ring them at two o'clock to the dinner table."

"The *Short-allowance Gentlemen*, on the contrary, are those who pay for each separate meal which they take. These you will always find, at this hour, earnestly contemplating Puffin's Island, as if they had discovered some new beauties in the place, and had no leisure left for eating, on purpose that they may make the morning breakfast hold out till supper time. The *Short-allowance Gentlemen*, therefore, live at half the expense of the *Reg'lars*."

I soon discovered that my friend, the waiter, was a sort of wag in his way, and I laughed heartily at the distinctions he had made. I thanked him for the very valuable information he had afforded, which would go far to make me a philosopher, or at least to look very much like one, if I had no money in my pocket; or what was quite as important, would teach me to turn my purse to the best account, when I

* This is the common pronounciation of Beaumaris throughout the neighbourhood.



could afford to become a *Reg'lar*, according to his notion of the term.

Beaumaris is the capital of Anglesey, and with the parishes of Llandegvan and Llanvaes to which it belongs, presents a bold and rocky front on the northern bank of the Menai, extending in a semicircular form for nearly three miles. Though the peculiar domestic architecture of its early history has disappeared, there yet remains its magnificent Castle in ruins, and such ruins as cannot fail to carry back the mind of the traveller to the age in which it arose in its pride and power, marking the tyranny and vassalage, with the condition and manners, of the thirteenth century. The outer *ballium* with its ten Moorish towers, which completely encase the fortress, exhibits its Arabian style of architecture; and viewed from that flat luxuriant meadow on which it stands, with the beautiful modern structure of Baron Hill close in sight, it produces an extraordinary effect, not only from its hoary antiquity, but from its foreign aspect. I ascended up the narrow stone staircase, and through the winding passages that perforate its massy walls, to the top of the ruins, and obtained that superb view for which it is famed, overlooking the broad channel, and sweeping with an unparalleled *coup d'œil* all those extraordinary natural objects with which this and the opposite coast abound. The walls have been reduced to nearly the same level, though still at a considerable height, and are all covered with luxuriant grass, with here and there a bastard tree springing out of the joints and fissures of the grey building. The figures of the banqueting-hall, state-rooms, and domestic apartments, may be distinctly traced, and the oblong square of the entire fortress, with its ample area extending nearly two hundred feet. The solitary footfall of the curious traveller is heard alone threading those fearful passages, along which the hurrying steps of mailed warriors and armed combatants resounded, and the only cry which that footfall awakens is that of the tribes

of innumerable crows, which have established here their "ancient solitary reign." The obliging *cicerone* who is installed as the portress of the ruins, has turned their ample space to good account. Her sleek black cow, of Alderney breed, ranges over the verdant square, and grazes in single blessedness within the mural curtain, while her lepine brood frolic and feed on the grassy summits of the walls. In August, 1832, the celebrated Eisteddfod was held in the area of this castle, and the old ruins rang with that minstrelsy which the lordly owner had proscribed, and called forth too by the descendants of those bards whom, in the day of his rule, he had hunted to the death.

The Church is a structure less ancient than the castle; but its early title of "the Chauntry of our Lady of Beaumaris," conveys the idea to the mind of its belonging to a period far distant from our own. It crowns an eminence in the centre of the place, and its chancel possesses a beautiful white alabaster monument, containing two recumbent figures on an altar tomb, representing Sir Richard Bulkeley in knightly armour, and his lady in a robe richly ornamented round the neck. In the vestry lie the remains of the Lady Beatrix, daughter of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, that pink of chivalry, but without any memorial; and in their solemn and for the most part undistinguished graves in the churchyard, are interred the bodies of the unfortunate beings who perished in the wreck of the Rothsay Castle.

Beaumaris contains a Town Hall, built in the sixteenth century, and a Free School which was erected and endowed in 1603, with a few old family dwellings. It possesses, also, some excellent hotels, but the most extensive establishment of this kind is the Bulkeley Arms. In the large dining-room belonging to this house, are the portraits of the members of the Anglesey Hunt, amongst which is that of the gallant Captain Skinner, whose name is recorded in the preceding pages of these wanderings.

It was market-day when I was at Beaumaris, and multitudes of peasants from the surrounding neighbourhood had thronged to this capital of the island, either to sell or buy the commodities of every-day life. I was threading one of the back streets of the town, on my way to the shore, and found it necessary to make an enquiry from one of these pretty *bourgeoise* that I met with, when my surprise and risibility were both excited as she answered, without the least hesitation, and with that mingled archness and *naiveté* which sit so bewitchingly on the intelligent countenance of a woman, "I can't speak English, Sir." I will be bound to say, that if I had put the same question, as I frequently had occasion to do, to one of my own sex, he would have answered seriously or sulkily, "Dim Saes'neg," and so I must have unravelled the clue myself, but without that pleasant feeling which followed this specimen of my fair respondent's ready wit.

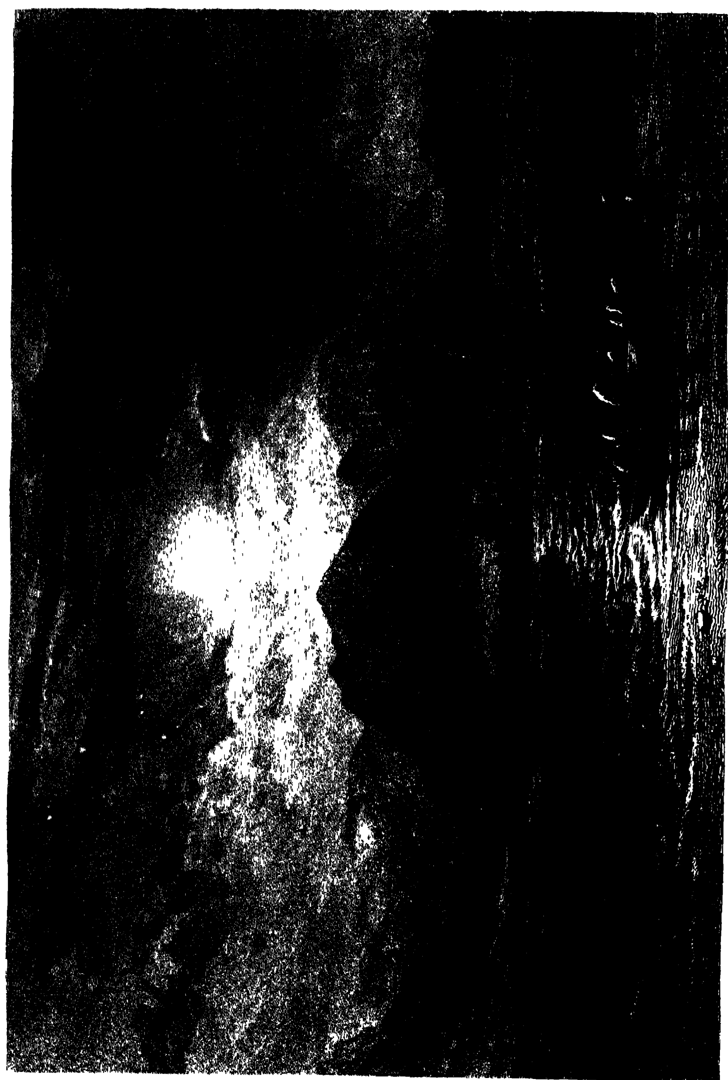
The neighbourhood of Beaumaris is abundant in objects of deep interest, which may well engage the attention of its summer visitors. Amongst these are the scanty remains of the ancient Friary of Llanvaes. A fragment of its walls, which are enclosed within a barn, is all that is left of the Monastery erected by Llewelyn ab Iorwerth in the thirteenth century, as the resting place of his wife, the Princess Joan, "whose pleasure it was," as the Welsh historian expresses it, "to be buried here." The stone coffin which once contained her remains, after the dissolution of the Abbey performed the office of a watering trough in the neighbourhood, not much unlike that to which the coffin of the crooked-backed tyrant was applied at Leicester; but it is now installed with due reverence in a sylvan recess near to the mansion of Baron Hill. Llangoed is a beautiful modern residence, and lies at an easy distance from the Abbey. From the eminence near to it, there is an extensive view of the vale which bears the name of the place, and the capacious bay, which from the peculiarity of the situation, appears sepa-

rated from the channel, and at high water gives no mean representation of the spacious lake of Geneva. Reaching forward, the summit of the Marian and Din Sylwy are attained, a strong post, formed of a double circle of stones, and which has the reputation of being Prince Arthur's Round Table. On the north side, from the top of Nant y Dihenydd, a tremendous precipice, the Tarpeian Rock of the Romans, the eye ranges over the expanse of the ocean, and commands a scene which exceeds in sublimity any other that the island can afford. Tre'r Castell, where dwelt the renowned Sir Tudor ab Goronwy,* of whose family the haughty Elizabeth, Queen of England, was a descendant,—Lleiniog, a small quadrangular fort, connected by a redoubt with the sea shore by the Earls of Chester and Shrewsbury,† when they conquered the island in the eleventh century,—and the quiet glen of Penmon, in which rest the ruins of its ancient Priory, a place of great sanctity, whose favourite chief Idwall, has been described by the poets of the times as

* "Edward I. hearing that Sir Tudor had assumed the honour of knighthood without his permission, called him to an account for so extraordinary a procedure; Sir Tudor replied, that by the laws of the Round Table, he had a right to do so, having the three requisites:—first, he was a gentleman; secondly, he had an ample fortune; and thirdly, as to his prowess, he was ready to fight any man, be he whom he would, that was hardy enough to dispute it. The King admiring the dignity of his manner, confirmed to Sir Tudor the honour he had so justly assumed and so well deserved."

† "The two Earls, invited by a traitor, invaded and ravaged North Wales, more like savages than soldiers; for the atrocities committed by them at this place were truly shocking. In the mean time Magnus, King of Norway, directed by providence to this island, whilst attempting to land, was opposed by the Earls; the Earl of Shrewsbury was, however, shot in the eye, as he stood cap-a-pie on the shore, by an expert bowman; Magnus, at the same time, tauntingly crying out, "Leit loup" (let him dance) when the Earl was in the agonies of death. Hugh Lupus, on the death of his colleague, quitted the Isle, built a Castle at Bangor, ravaged the promontory of Llëyn, so that it was desolate for seven years, returned to Chester, and then died."—*Caradoc.*





"the sunshine of the country," are all rich in their peculiar scenic beauty, and their moral and historical associations.*

PRIESTHOLME, or PUFFIN ISLAND, will afford a day of sport to the disciple of Colonel Hawker,—or of information to the industrious antiquary,—or amusement to a pic-nic party, and indeed, to all the migratory tribes that may be sojourning at Beaumaris. It is nearly a mile from the shore, to the edge of which it slopes in verdant turf on each side from its lofty central eminence. The island is in shape like a lemon, extending a mile in length, and half a mile in breadth. Near the centre are the ruins of an old square tower, supposed to have been a portion of a religious house once subordinate to the Priory of Penmon, which from the "odour of sanctity" thrown around it by popular tradition, attracted many devotees, and penitents, and dying persons, to its sacred shrine, either as the subjects of pilgrimage or prayer, or to obtain interment within its holy walls. Of the brotherhood of this establishment, old Giraldus relates the following remarkable story.† The superior reputation which this mon-

* "About a century and a half ago, some beneficent person is said to have thrown about a hundred oysters into the Menai, where they increased wonderfully, as they also do in different places, by the storm driving their seeds in various directions. These fine Penmon oysters are pickled at Beaumaris, and put in small neat casks, constructed for the purpose, which are sent to distant parts of the kingdom. A great variety of fish are taken by the trawl on the north-east side of Anglesey, and in the wear on the shore between Beaumaris and Penmon; in short, the whole shore is a mine of fish. Within the memory of persons now living, it was customary for the ministers of parishes near the seashore, to attend and read prayers while the nets were laid out, and to receive, at the drawing up, a part of the produce. The late apostolic Dr. Wilson, Bishop of Man, composed a formulary for this purpose: and close to Llandrillo is an oratory (like an inverted bee hive) in which the clergyman read the formula. It is not unusual for the fishermen on leaving the shore to lay down their nets, for a few minutes, and in that interval to repeat the Lord's prayer."

† "There is a small island almost adjoining Anglesea, which is inhabited by hermits, living by manual labour, and serving God. It is remarkable that when

astery enjoyed, induced the Welsh Princes, Llewellyn and David, and after the conquest of the country, Edward I., to grant to it the revenues of Penmon. Prince Owen Gwynedd was the founder of this religious house, and lies buried here; and its sanctuary became the refuge at once of the oppressor and the oppressed in that lawless age to which it belonged. Little remains to attest the presence of the crowds of devout men that thronged it; or of the noble, the wealthy, and the poor, that once were interred in its consecrated cemetery. A colony of rabbits has usurped their territory, and swarms of cormorants, stormy petrels, curlews, and *puffin auks*, and even, though comparatively but rarely seen, peregrine falcons, hasten to these shores in the summer months to breed, and nurture their young. The visitor on surveying this desolate spot, with his mind embued with the recollections of its ancient state, will be ready to say:—

"How many hearts have here grown cold,
That sleep these mouldering tombs among?
How many beads have here been told?
How many matins here been sung?
On this rude stone, by time long broke,
Methinks I see some pilgrim kneel;
Methinks I see the censer smoke,
And faintly hear the solemn peal.
But here no more soft music floats—
No holy anthems chaunted now;—
All's hush'd, except the seafowl's notes,
Hoarse murmuring from yon craggy brow."

The far-famed copper mines at PARIS MOUNTAIN may be visited from Beaumaris; they are on the northern part of the island, near the town of Amlwch. Although they are of

by the influence of human passion, any discord arises among them, all their provisions are devoured and infected by a species of small mice, with which the island abounds; but when the discord ceases they are no longer molested. This island is called, in Welsh, Ynis Lenach (or Priest's Island), because many bodies of saints are deposited there, and no woman is suffered to enter it."

great extent, and formerly produced immense annual revenues to the proprietors, yet it is mentioned that at present the receipts scarcely more than cover the disbursements. Mr. Pennant thinks these mines were worked by the Romans, from the circumstance of his having discovered some ancient operations; but it was not until the year 1768 that the great mineral riches of the mountain became known, when upwards of one thousand persons had constant employment.* The ore was mixed with and embedded in slate, descending in depth from twenty to fifty fathoms. The Mona and Paris Mines yielded, for a great number of years, about three thousand tons of copper annually; but during the last ten years the average quantity has not exceeded seven hundred tons.

AMLWCH is a large and dirty town† consisting chiefly of miners, or persons connected with mining operations, situate at the foot of Paris Mountain, and close to the harbour, which, having been formed out of a natural cleft in the rock, has a very singular appearance. The place now presents a

* This discovery took place in rather a curious manner. The mines had been farmed by Messrs. Roe and Co., of Macclesfield; but so dissatisfied was this firm with the result of their engagement, that directions were given to the agent to withdraw the men, and to abandon the losing concern. This person, however, was convinced by various signs of the riches which the earth contained, and before he obeyed these directions he was determined to make one great effort for discovery. He divided his men into parties of five, and sent them into different parts in the immediate neighbourhood to bore the land, and on the 2nd of March, 1768, after perforating the earth for about seven feet, one of the parties came upon that famous vein of solid ore, which, for many succeeding years, constituted the riches of the Paris Mountains. The miners of this place have ever since kept the 2nd of March, as a day of festival.

† Mr. Bingley thus describes the locality:—Amlwch is a black and dismal place, owing to the scoria of which the roads are formed. On the exterior of the town the country is a scene of barrenness and desolation. The sulphureous fumes from the mines have entirely destroyed the vegetation for a considerable space around.

pauperized and decreasing population; the source of its former prosperity being removed, by the recent ill success attendant on working the mines, while many of its inhabitants, deprived of their old employment, are but ill adapted either for farming or fishing pursuits.

The island of Anglesey abounds in numerous and varied relics of antiquity; for the records of its history stretch far beyond its conquest by the Romans, and include the memorials belonging to British, Saxon, and English possession. It was the *ultima Thule* of the Romans, and, when they subjugated it, the last refuge of persecuted and expiring Druidism. To this island-hold the imperial foe pursued a superstition that, in its power over the passions and affections of the people, presented perpetual obstacles to their conquering arms. The first invasion was led on by Suetonius, who crossed the Straits at the passage of Moel y Don, upon a bridge of boats. This island was at that time crowned and girt with dark groves of the sacred oak, their trunks perpetually green with the embracing arms of the mysterious misletoe. The sacrificing fires were prepared near their enormous cromlechs, in expectation of their invaders. The priests arrayed in their flowing vestments, were invoking vengeance on the approaching foe. The women with dishevelled hair, and frantic gestures, ran to and fro, tossing on high the blazing brands they had snatched from the altars, and the whole scene was one of strange, unnatural, superstitious horror. The stern Roman paused in consternation at the border of this terrible picture, and then pushed forward his legions and cohorts, which the feeble and bewildered bands of the Druids were not able to withstand, and in the bloody victory which ensued, they threw the bearded priests into the very fires which they had lighted up. The victors and the vanquished have both disappeared for ever; but the cromlechs, those altars of sacrifice, still remain; and the car-

nedds, or barrows, those huge sepultures of the dead, are frequently and fitly seen side by side with them. Now and then, indeed, some indefatigable antiquary has opened upon their dark caverns the visions of daylight, and dispersed their hidden treasures of dry bones. This is an ancient land, and in this latter feature of its antiquities, cannot fail to bring the mind of the reader into connection with those classical regions of the earth's early history, where the same memorials greet the eye of the traveller as he passes along the Hellespont, or traverses the plains of Greece. There are still remaining nearly thirty cromlechs in different parts of the island, one of the largest of which is at Plas Newydd, the seat of the Marquis of Anglesey. Its upper stone is about twelve feet and a half long, twelve broad, and four in thickness. Near this cromlech is an extensive carnedd which was opened by Sir Nicholas Bailey a century since, and disclosed to view a large quantity of human remains.

The crumbling fortress, and the ruined abbey, are the monuments of a later date, and mark the changes that have taken place from the Heptarchy to the Tudors,—from Egbert to Henry the Eighth.

"The presence of perpetual change
  Is ever on the earth;—
To-day is only as the soil
  That gives *to-morrow* birth.

Where stood the tower, there grows the weed;
  Where stood the weed the tower:
No present hour its likeness leaves
  To any future hour."

CHAPTER X.

ABER—PENMAEN MAWR—CONWAY—LLANRWST, &c.

"Where'er we gaze, around, above, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonize the whole!
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll,
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul."

I left Beaumaris in the sunshine of an early summer's morning, and proceeded towards the ferry which was to transfer me from the island to Carnarvonshire. The place of embarkation, which lies near the town, is a point of land anciently denominated Penrhyn Safnes, but afterwards "Osmund's Air," from a malefactor there executed, and who, on his way to the fatal spot, jocosely observed he was only going to take the air. Among the passengers in the ferry-boat was a drover, proceeding on business to Aber. This man was, in his way, a great traveller: he had been at Liverpool, Birmingham, and Manchester; and first and last had had great dealings with the Saxons over the border; yet his Saes'neg was not over abundant. In fact, he spoke a jargon in comparison with which the Doric of the High-

lands might be regarded as clear and intelligible. Though a pig-drover, he was a great patriot; that is, he thought every thing Welsh superior to whatever of similar kind could be found in any other country. In his opinion, there was no good ale on the wrong side of the Dee. The very pigs, he averred, were in England more scraggy and long-legged than in *Cymry;* and looking with an arch grin at Penmaen Mawr, which towered magnificently above the bleak, rocky shore, "There!" said he, pointing with his finger at the huge mountain, "has she any hills like that in her country?"

No one can have visited a land abounding, like Wales, with magnificent scenery, without wishing for a vocabulary varied and rich as the landscape. Before me, stretching from right to left, far as the eye could reach, rose a chain of peaks, connected at their bases by a curtain of rocks and lower ranges, and presenting an aspect truly Alpine; but language supplies no expressions that could paint the effect of the whole assemblage upon the mind. As Mont Blanc among the Savoyard glaciers, so towers Snowdon above the surrounding heights, luminous, yet variegated in hue, clothed with aerial tints, and often almost transparent as a cloud.

Having accomplished the traject of the narrow frith, we walked across the Levan Sands to Aber, a distance of nearly four miles. Our pig-drover, who was perfectly acquainted with the localities, here acted as our guide; and his knowledge was of real value to us; for since the sands shift continually, they are not to be traversed without considerable danger. When the thick fogs of autumn or winter lie upon the ground, the great bell of the village, presented for the purpose, as he informed us, by Lord Bulkeley, is constantly rung, as a signal to direct the footsteps of persons landing from Beaumaris.

It appears that, many years ago, the site of the present Levan Sands formed a well-cultivated and inhabited tract of land, and that the sudden advance of the ocean swept away the people and cattle of the district in one overwhelming flood.* Tradition is here assisted by the remaining works of industry and art. At low ebbs, Pughe, in *Cambria Depicta*, says,—ruined houses are yet to be seen, and a causeway, pointing from Puffin Island to Penmaen Mawr, which is easily visible. The boatman placed me right over it, and, keeping the boat's head to the tide, enabled me to examine it well; but though apparently near, the man said it could not be less than two fathoms deep.

Aber is a small rural hamlet, situated at the entrance of a deep glen, which, running directly inland into the heart of the mountains, is bounded on one side by the stupendous hill, called Maes y Gaer, whose grey surface is partly bare, and partly hidden by trees. Down the steep declivity of the mountain that closes the extremity of the glen, at the distance of about a mile from the village, a cataract of vast height precipitates itself, which has not without reason been compared to the Staubbach in the valley of Lauterbrunnen. In the mouth of the defile, near the village, stands a great artificial mound, the site in other days of one of Llewellyn's palaces. Many years ago some antiquarian, by excavating for the purpose, discovered several of its massy substructions. Old Leland, that indefatigable itinerant, has mentioned this fact; and in his record of it makes known the forest-like character which the country at that time exhibited. "In

* These sands received at first the appellation of Wylefaen, or the place of weeping, from the shrieks and lamentations of the inhabitants when it was suddenly overflowed by the sea, in the days of Helis ab Glanog. Such an event was calculated to make a deep impression upon the mind in that superstitious age, and accordingly we find that eight of the sons of Helis became the patron saints of the neighbouring parishes.

a wood," says that pilgrim, "in the parish of Aber, Llywelyn ab Jorwerth had a house on a hill, part of which now standeth." The forest has fallen under the axe of the woodman, and the mound now exposes its bare breast almost close to the road side. In after days, during the last struggle of this noble country for its freedom, it is said that Owen Glendower, whom Shakspeare describes as

> "A worthy gentleman,
> Exceeding well read, and profited
> In strange concealments;
> Valiant as a lion, and wondrous affable,
> And bountiful as mines of India,"

used to pour the full tide of his native eloquence upon the ears of his assembled countrymen from this hill, and fired their hearts to deeds of martial daring in the cause of their nation's liberty. At this place was the ancient seat of Rhys ab Sir William Thomas, a descendant of Athelstan Gludrudd, founder of one of the five royal tribes of Wales, which is still in a great degree entire, having a specula or watch-tower attached to it, so necessary in those troublous times.

On quitting Aber, I pursued the road following the sweep of the coast towards PENMAEN MAWR, whose rocky, precipitous base, running out in a bluff promontory, projects into the waves. In the course of the afternoon, while pausing on an eminence to contemplate the features of the landscape, I beheld at a distance a vast rainbow, stretching its purple-tinged radius from shore to shore. It was a glorious spectacle. The contrast of the many-coloured bow with the dark waters, the sparkling clearness of the sky above, the brightness of the sunshine resting on the surrounding hills, and the various features of the nearer scenery, formed altogether so magnificent a scene that even the traveller in the grander regions of the Valais or Savoy can seldom witness any thing more sublime.

It was towards nightfall when I approached that part of my journey where the road, hewn out of the solid rock, was like a terrace midway along the face of the mountain, many hundred feet above the sea, which breaks in thunder below. The evening was mild and beautiful. Clouds, slightly charged with lightning, hung over sea and land; and from time to time bright flashes, unaccompanied by thunder, kindled the firmament,—showing momentarily the form of the clouds, and gleaming over the face of the ocean. Occasionally the eye caught by this transient light, glimpses of the black, beetling rocks overhanging the road, communicating to them a gloomy grandeur of character which I should in vain endeavour to describe. Formerly, before the road had been widened, and defended by a parapet, this passage of Penmaen Mawr was full of danger.* But, though terrific, it is now perfectly safe; unless we contemplate the possibility of the rain or frost detaching, as it sometimes does, vast rocky fragments of the superincumbent

* Pennant observes, that "a vein of crumbling stratum in one part so contracted the road as to excite new horrors." "But the breach," he adds, "is now effectually repaired by a series of arches,—a work the just admiration of travellers." Here, during the latter part of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, numerous accidents happened; some of which, in his pleasant way, he relates:—"I have often heard," says he, "of an accident, attended with such romantic circumstances that I would not venture to mention it, had I not the strongest traditional authority to this day, in the mouth of every one in the parish of Llanvair Vachan, in which this promontory stands. Above a century ago, Sion Humphries, of this parish, paid his addresses to Ann Thomas, of Creyddin, on the other side of Conway river. They had made an appointment to meet at the town of Conway. He, in his way, fell over Penmaen Mawr; she was overset in the ferry-boat, and was the only person saved out of more than fourscore. They were married, and lived very long together in the parish of Llanfair. She was buried 1744, aged 116. He survived her five years, and was buried 1749, close by her in the parish churchyard, where their graves are familiarly shown to this day."

mountain, and hurling them headlong upon the helpless traveller. Ideas of such catastrophes naturally enough present themselves, in such situations, to the mind; it was therefore not without pleasure that I found myself beyond the possibility of danger.

Correctly speaking, this great mountain promontory has two divisions,—one of which is called Penmaen Mawr, the other Penmaen Bach,—the latter lying the nearest to Conway; but the whole is generally known to the tourist by the former name. Less than a century ago, a narrow zigzag path, along the side of the rock, was the only convenience for travellers. At that time there was an inn at each end of the pass, and the witty Dean Swift is said to have composed the following couplets, which greeted the admiring traveller on the sign-posts as he entered and debouched from it:—

"Before you venture here to pass,
Take a good refreshing glass;

Now you're over take another,
Your drooping spirits to recover."

It was from the many accidents which occurred that the Legislature was induced, in 1772, to assist in carrying out the plan projected by Mr. John Sylvester, and in forming the present grand terrace, which has more recently been further enlarged and improved under the direction of Mr. Telford. It is well guarded on the sea side, and many of the overhanging fragments of rock have been blasted.

This mountain road is daily losing some of its terrific features. A company formed in Liverpool, for converting its granite walls into materials for Macadamising roads, now occupies a considerable portion of the rock; and thousands of tons are broken into suitable sizes for that purpose, and exported during the year; so that Penmaen Mawr, which has

stood in its solitude through countless generations of ages, seems destined to be literally trodden under foot in our crowded streets and tramping thoroughfares. While I was tracing this sublime pass, I beheld the work of demolition in busy progress upon the sides of the mountain. Men, in every direction, were blasting and breaking the masses and fragments of this giant rock; and, by an ingenious contrivance, the machinery which regulated the descent of the loaded waggons along the iron rails fixed upon its almost perpendicular sides, was made, by a coincident action, to draw up the empty carriages,—contriving a perpetual ascent and descent between the magazines of broken stones and the quays of embarkation.

It seems natural, in contemplating the present state of this national road, to fall back in imagination upon the period when the traveller had to brace up his courage to enter upon its almost desperate track; and while looking upon the sluggish craft lying at ease close to the shelving shore, waiting their concrete cargo, to call to mind how often the storm-tost vessel was driven upon this iron-bound coast, to meet with almost certain destruction.

Penmaen Mawr contained on its summit a stronghold, called Braich y Dinas, the Arm of the City, built by the ancient Britons, of extraordinary strength, and of such extent that twenty thousand men might have sheltered within its walls. Some remains of this fortress are still to be seen, and the well which supplied the British and Welsh garrisons with water remains in the innermost enclosure, as full as ever. During the sanguinary war, in which the Principality was reduced to a tributary tenure upon England, the inhabitants of the surrounding country, with their cattle and property, found refuge in its enclosure. Here, also, the retreating army of Lewellyn lay entrenched till the treaty was signed between that prince and Edward; and so



well did the troops take advantage of the resources which the mountain afforded, that their assailants were used to say, "the Welshmen rained rocks upon them."

It was the gathering twilight hour when I first entered the gates of CONWAY, and the features of the surrounding country had nearly become invisible. I hastened along its principal street; and attracted by the clean and comfortable appearance of the place, which seemed to predicate good cheer and a smiling welcome, I threw down my scrip in the commodious parlour of the "Castle Hotel," and soon found that I had no reason to regret my selection. Were I to visit some noble mansion, in the height of its prosperity, be it castle or hall, I would choose to do so in the broad light of noon, with as much sunshine flaring upon it as could be well gathered into a summer's day; but give me the still hour of evening, or "the pale moonlight," in which to contemplate the ruins whose history is linked with the past, whether that past be interwoven with national or domestic records. Such is the colour of my mind; and I accordingly pursued my way through the southern gate of the city, and traversed a sufficient space of the road to give me a full view of the castle tower and its crenellated walls. It is not merely the curious *sight-seeing* propensity, that faculty so rife in all travellers, that is to be gratified in the examination of Conway Castle. There is the rich and comprehensive faculty of mental reflection to be brought into exercise upon such an interesting object;—there is the philosophy of history traced in deep lines upon its mouldering ruins. This castle was reared at the distant era of the Crusades, and in what the present historian denominates the feudal age. Its peculiar Moorish architecture attests that its type belongs to eastern lands, and we know that its erection followed close upon the return of its founder, who had led the hosts of England from their homes to essay the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the

hand of the Saracen, in that strange war of mingled superstition and religious enthusiasm. Its history speeds over a series of events, and a space of time, that comprehends the most important facts which belong to European society, and includes those changes in the condition of the human family which reach from a state of abject slavery and social barbarism to that of personal freedom and national refinement. The transition state had been long and cruel; but to look upon these mysterious ruins at this hour, in a suitable frame of mind, was to read the page of history at a glance. In nature, all things continued as from the beginning; but a momentous change had passed over this work of man's device. High over head shone the polar star, in its pristine brilliancy. The planet Mars was completing, in radiant beauty, his transit, as when, at the creation, he rolled upon his sphere, amidst the song of the morning stars;—the mighty ocean was setting in with his murmuring tide, just the same as when, at first, he received that law which his dark waters have never since ceased to obey. All these features of nature remained perfect and unaltered; but the hands that had wrought the strong masonry of that fabric,—the chivalric array that had passed and repassed those massy gates, "clad in burning arms,"—the warlike bands that had thronged those broad battlements in the day of conflict,—the noisy burghers that had raised tumults in the city when their civil rights were restricted, or their purses mulcted by feudal despotism or regal extravagance,—had all "passed away, to be *no more seen.*" It was in this train of thought that I returned to my sojourn at the "Hotel," to give to the dreams of the night the subjects which had formed the events and occupied the ruminations of the day.

In the morning I ascended the rock on which stands the castle. A little wooden bridge supplies the place of the ancient portcullis, and ushers the stranger into the ruins.

From this spot a clear view of the triangular or harp-like form of the town is obtained, with all the buildings, public and domestic, gathered within its enclosing walls. The site of Conway occupies a steep declivity, descending to the margin of the river, here nearly half a mile in breadth, and is in itself extremely fine; while its majestic castle presents, from a distance, an aspect of singular grandeur. Formerly, a curtain, terminating in a round tower, ran out from either end of the town walls into the river, to impede the approach of an enemy by water; but of these one tower only now remains,—the other, with both towers, has long since yielded to time. From the quay is seen a noble view up and down the river, and over the contrajacent country, broken up into swelling hills, and beautified with woods and villas.

The castle, built in 1284, under the eye of Edward I., by the architect, it is supposed, whom he employed in the erection of Carnarvon, is very justly regarded as one of the most beautiful fortresses in a country distinguished for the splendour and magnificence of its military structures. Though more extensive and better preserved, it somewhat resembles the castle of Falaise, in Normandy. Its base, however, is less wooded, and there is no brawling streamlet leaping, as there, from rock to rock, at its foot; but instead, a broad, majestic river, and a creek full at high water, sweep round two of its sides. The other two face the town. Within the walls are two spacious courts; and the external line of the fortifications contains eight lofty towers, each with a slender turret, singularly graceful and elegant in form, springing from its summit.

The great hall on the right measures 130 feet long and 30 broad, and is lighted by six lancet-shaped windows, opening out upon the creek, and three pointed windows, of exquisite tracery, looking towards the ample court. Eight

Gothic arches, four of which remain entire, supported the roof of this magnificent apartment. A lofty Norman arched window at each end, and two broad carved fire-places, completed the architectural decorations and appearances of the hall. This spacious hall was the scene of the Christmas revelries to which Edward and his queen invited the English nobility and their high-spirited dames, while the monarch was forging the chain that was for ever to enslave the prostrate Principality. The walls, on all sides, are covered with a green drapery of luxuriant ivy, and a meadow of grass lies in the open area of the courts. The warder's duty is supplied by a whole tribe of crows, whose solemn parley is heard the instant a stranger's foot approaches the domain they have usurped; and the ivied walls are nearly alive with blackbirds, and birds of all colour, whose notes resound for the live-long day throughout these otherwise deserted ruins. Two entrances, both contrived for security, led into the fortress; one by winding narrow stairs, up a steep rock, from the Conway, and terminating in a small advanced work before one of the castle gates, covered by two round towers,—the other towards the town, protected by similar works, with the addition of a drawbridge over a broad moat.

Notwithstanding its grandeur and importance, this castle makes no great figure in history. Soon after its erection, the royal founder was besieged in it by the Welsh, and the garrison nearly reduced to an unconditional surrender by famine. Finally, however, they were extricated from their perilous situation by the arrival of a fleet with reinforcements and provisions. In 1399, Richard II., then in Ireland, commanded the troops, raised in his behalf against the haughty Bolingbroke, to assemble at Conway,—and their numbers were considerable; but the vacillation and feebleness of purpose of that monarch induced many of them to abandon him on his arrival; yet the remainder was still



sufficient to have made head against the usurper, had not the king, who feared to fight his own battles, basely abandoned his followers, and rushed blindly into the snare laid for him by his enemies. During the Civil Wars, Conway Castle was at first held by Archbishop Williams for the king; but the warlike churchman, being superseded by the fiery Rupert in the command of North Wales, went over in dudgeon to the Republican party, and personally assisted the gallant General Mytton in the reduction of the castle. While the republic flourished, this noble fortress was suffered to retain all its ancient grandeur undiminished; but on the Restoration, a grant having been made of it, by the Stuart, to the Earl of Conway, its new possessor ordered his agent to remove the timber, iron, lead, and other valuable materials, and send them to Ireland, ostensibly for his master's service, though it is generally supposed they were intended for his own use. A suitable fate attended this desecration of one of the finest structures of antiquity,—the vessels which conveyed the materials being wrecked, and the whole of the property entirely lost.

This ancient Castle is the fictitious scene of the drama of the *Castle Spectre*, and of *The Bard* of Gray. In the year 1811 there still lived, at Conway, one of the minstrel tribe,* scarcely less gifted than the proudest of that race, whose magic powers, when they were heard by one of Eng-

* Mr. Edwards, the harper of Conway, as he was generally called, had been blind from his birth, and was endowed with that extraordinary musical genius by which persons suffering under such a visitation are not unfrequently indemnified. From the respectability of his circumstances, he was not called upon to exercise his talents with any view to remuneration. He played to delight himself and others; and the innocent complacency with which he enjoyed the ecstacies called forth by his skill, and the degree of appreciation with which he regarded himself, as in a manner consecrated, by being made the depositary of a direct gift from heaven, were, as far as possible, removed from any of the common modifications of vanity and self-conceit.—*Life of Mrs. Hemans.*

land's fairest and most talented daughters, called forth a strain not unworthy of his rare merits:—

> "Thine is the charm suspending care,
> The heavenly swell, the dying close,
> The cadence melting into air,
> That lulls each passion to repose;
> While transport, lost in silence near,
> Breathes all her language in a tear."

The Suspension Bridge, by Mr. Telford, is constructed on the same principle as that of the Menai, though on a smaller scale, and presents an appearance singularly elegant, lying at the foot of the antique castle, and surrounded by scenery of the most picturesque description. It is three hundred and twenty feet in length between the supporting towers, and eighteen feet above high-water mark. The chains on the western side pass upwards of fifty feet under the castle, and are fastened in the granite foundations on which it is built. On the farther side they are bolted into an insular rock, which rises in the bed of the river, and forms the strait through which the gushing waters pass on their way to the sea.*

The piers of the bridge, and the toll-house at the western extremity, are built in strict keeping with the architecture of the castle. An embankment, formed of hard clay, faced with solid masonry of stone, and stretching from the insular rock to the western shore of the county of Denbigh, a length of six hundred and seventy-one yards, with a breadth of thirty feet, and an extreme elevation of fifty-four feet, exhibits one of the finest and firmest *chaussées* in the world. From a rising ground, a little beyond this embankment, the

* A few years before the bridge was built, owing to a heavy swell, the boat conveying the Chester and Irish Mail, with eight passengers, the coachman, guard, and a youth about the age of fifteen, in all fifteen in number including the boatmen, was upset, and only two persons saved.



accompanying beautiful view is taken; and it combines, perhaps, the most happy illustration of the architectural harmony and local scenery which this interesting place affords.

The Church, though ancient, contains scarcely anything worthy of notice, except the following inscription, engraved on a stone in the nave of the building, which though found in Pennant and other tourists, is so curious as to deserve repetition: "Here lyeth the body of Nicholas Hookes, of Conway, gentleman, (who was the forty-first child of his father, William Hookes, Esq., by Alice, his wife,) the father of twenty-seven children, who died the 27th day of March, 1637." In the market-place is an old building called Plas Mawr, which was erected more than two centuries ago. It is deserving the notice of the antiquarian. The town is surrounded by a very thick wall, strengthened by twenty-four towers, most of which remain in tolerable preservation.

The pearl fishery of the Conway was celebrated even in the time of the Romans; and, according to the elder Pliny, Julius Cæsar, returning from his marauding expedition into Britain, from whence, as Tacitus observes, he was beaten out, dedicated, in one of the temples of Rome, a breastplate, set with British pearls, probably from this fishery; and in comparatively modern times, one of these pearls, presented to the Queen of Charles II. by Sir R. Wynne, was honoured with a place in the regal crown, where probably it yet shines in testimony of the loyalty of the Welchman and the riches of Wales. It is stated, but I know not how truly, that a considerable trade is still carried on in the pearls found in the bed of the Conway and on the adjacent coast. These pearls are supposed to be equal in size and colour to any found in Great Britain. Some years ago, Sir Robert Vaughan appeared at court with a button and loop in his hat crusted with Cambrian pearls.

Having a desire to see the splendid marine views which I had been informed are presented from the Great Orme's Head, a lofty promontory,* which projects into the sea, and forms the eastern entrance to Beaumaris Bay, I wandered thither one fine morning, passing near the ruins of the ancient Castle of Diganwy, a fortress that may be traced to the Norman conquest, and which is closely connected with the various conflicts in which this country has been engaged. • By turning to the right a little out of my way, I passed the beautiful estate of Gloddaeth, on which is a mansion erected by Sir Roger Mostyn, in the reign of Elizabeth. This house is famed for its library of ancient Welch manuscripts, and is well worth a visit from the beauty of its grounds. Proceeding onwards over slippery downs and rocks, I reached Llandidno Church, which serves the purpose of a beacon; and thence scaled the highest point of the Great Orme's Head, where the prospect is said to be very extensive in clear

* "About seven or eight ,ears since, the brig Hornby, bound from Liverpool to South America, with a cargo valued at upwards of £60,000, was driven from her course by a heavy gale; and, about midnight, was dashed against the rugged front of the Great Orme's Head, and instantly sunk. One of the crew happened at this terrible moment to be out upon the bowsprit, and he was flung by the concussion upon a narrow shelf of the rock, where he lay for some time stunned and confounded; but at length, exerting that mechanical energy which providence beneficently supplies for self-preservation, even in the total absence of consciousness, and which sometimes achieves more than deliberation would dare to attempt, he succeeded in getting to the top of that frightful precipice, and crawled to a smithy at a little distance, where he was found at five o'clock in the morning by some workmen employed there, in connection with a neighbouring copper mine. He told his melancholy story, but was laughed at by his incredulous auditory; for he could only say that he had climbed up the horrid steep which had wrecked the vessel; how he knew not, and the thing appeared impossible to those acquainted with the place. At day-light, however, (for it was winter) portions of a wreck were discovered near the spot, and the truth of the man's story was shortly after made apparent. No other individual of the Hornby's crew, or thing belonging to her, was saved."

weather; but I was disappointed in my expectations, as a light mist hung over the sea. This great rock is inhabited by myriads of sea-birds, who are secured from molestation in the steep and inaccessible crags. On returning to Conway by the Little Orme's Head I entered Denbighshire, and traversed a small but lovely vale, richly wooded, and embosomed in swelling hills. A small stream which unites, at some distance below, with the Conway, meanders fantastically through the hollow, tempting the angler from his road; and its course, sometimes visible, sometimes concealed by golden copses, conducts the eye up the vale until it is lost among the hills.

On quitting Conway, the weather, as it had been during the greater part of my journey from Holyhead, was extremely beautiful; and the varied tints which had already settled on the landscape, rendered every feature of the country doubly interesting. On my left the Denbighshire hills, covered with heath and gorse in flower, threw their broad shadows over the stream and valley; while the towering mountains of Carnarvonshire, appearing in the distance towards the right, presented a resemblance to the Alps as beheld from the fertile plains of the Milanese.

The Conway, after its confluence with the Llugwy, near the village of Bettws y Coed, flows in a full volume through the valley to which it gives its name, forming a reach of unequalled beauty to the town of Llanrwst. From this place it again stretches onward with increased velocity, and an ampler channel, up to the walls of Conway, which may be said to lie at the head of the vale. I was now ascending its course by the high road, and from the rising ground at a comparatively short distance from the fortress, I paused to contemplate the brilliant scene which in every direction opened out to my view. The eminences which rise immediately on the eastern bank of the river had lost much of their savage

mountainous character, and had become exchanged for the gentler beauties of pasture land and corn fields, mapped into lines of all shapes, varied with all the colours of red fallow and springing crops, and sloping in sweeps and undulations down to the river's brink. Behind me the subjects were quite different: swelling hills, stupendous mountains, and glimmering peaks rose and reared themselves, with all the gradations of the beautiful and sublime, till their elevations were lost in the clouds, and their figures vanished in the distance. Amidst these congregated rocks the eye recognises the heavy features of Bwlch Dyvan, and the enormous front of Carnedd Llewelyn, holding supremacy even amongst these granite Titans, and reigning as the lords of these stern solitudes. About five miles from Conway a quiet road branches off on the left to the church yard of Caerhyn, or Caer Rhun, celebrated for containing three of the most magnificent yews that are now to be found in the principality, trees that are the growth of centuries, and majestic as cedars of Lebanon. Near it is the pleasant little village, surrounded by wood and open to the water; this is supposed to have been the Conovium of the Romans, and in Camden's time was called Caer Hen, the Old City. Many remains have been dug from the superincumbent earth by the indefatigable antiquarian, which prove it to have been a station belonging to that warlike people; and a villa of considerable extent has been discovered, including a sudatory, or ancient bath. On such a spot as this the creating power of the imagination might readily cause "the men that have been" to re-appear.

> "Romans for travel girt, for business gown'd:
> While some recline on couches, myrtle-crown'd,
> In festal glee."

It is scarcely possible, even in North Wales to select a road more full of interesting subjects than is that from Conway to Llanrwst. Before the traveller reaches the sixth mile stone

he crosses Tal y Pont, a little stone bridge which conducts the stream from Llindillyn Pool, hurrying, and babbling all the while, to join the river. About two miles farther is the Fall of Porth Llwyd, or, as it is called by the country people, Rhaiadr Mawr, the Great Fall. The path which ascends the mountain side, turns off immediately to the right of the road, and winds up in a zigzag direction to an almost breathless distance. The mid-day sun was blazing over all the landscape when I followed the ruddy maiden that I had prevailed upon to be my *conducteur* on this occasion. The path was the most difficult I had yet encountered, at one time skirting the edge of the dizzy precipice, at others threading the tracks which the mountain flocks had made, who seemed as much at home upon these hirsute rocks as their bearded predecessors. I was fairly out of breath by the time I had reached the head of the fall, and my hardy guide, albeit a mountaineer from her cradle, was obliged not unfrequently to pause to recover strength under the vertical sun that was darting his rays right over head. Having pointed to a ledge of the rock that she said commanded the best view of the fall, she retired to a distance, and left me to the contemplation of this gigantic and marvellous subject. The mountain pool of Llyn Egian supplies the water of the river, which rolls murmuring along the table land of this alpine region till it reaches the rocky forehead of the cavern, down which it rushes with headlong fury.* A bolt of the rocky headland interrupts the falling torrent, which descends in a divided stream of unequal breadth, like a rent sheet of thick foam, glittering in the sunshine, and casting its white spray amongst

* At the time I was on the spot the weather had been unusually dry for many days, and the stream of the waters exhibited this divarication; but I have no doubt when the rain has swelled the mountain river, that it dashes down in one unbroken cataract.

the trees that overhang the gulph, as if they had become the enchanted spectators of this magnificent scene.

Sheltered in some degree by the surrounding shade, and cooled by the humid atmosphere which the turbulent waters created, I lingered for some time watching their descent as they chafed, and roared, and precipitated themselves from rock to chasm, lingering impatiently for a while in the hollow basins which time and their eternal wear had formed, and then again dashing forward with increased impetuosity, till their distant murmur was heard like a second note to the deep base thunder of their first mighty plunge. The whole course of the descent, with its windings and turnings, cannot be much less than a mile, and a composition of more savage grandeur and wild beauty I have never before looked upon. When the stream approaches towards the bottom, a portion of the waters is diverted aside, and carried, by means of an artificial channel, over a large wheel, which possesses sufficient power to turn at once a flour and a paper mill. To this useful purpose I found, in many similar instances, the natives have wisely converted this powerful element, when it has thus acquired the irresistible force and impulse of its mountain descent.

About a mile further the traveller comes upon the more picturesque and less impetuous Falls of Dolgarrog, supplied by the waters of the Llyn Cowlyd. The beauty of this scene may be viewed even from the road which he is travelling; but it is best inspected by treading a short winding path immediately before the bridge under which the waters hasten with lover-like expedition to the embrace of the river. Looking upwards from one of the rocky masses which lie in the bed of the stream, the eye gathers in all which belongs to man, and solitude, and the wild untamed beauties of nature. Here, as at Porth Llwyd, two mills, belonging severally to a fuller and a paper-maker, contribute their elements of inter-

est to the variety of the picture, and the clacking wheels and busy operatives give both voice and animation to the scene.

At a little distance the narrow stream of a mineral spring trickles down the declivity on the same side, and marks its course among the rocks and green shrubs by its deep orange-coloured hue, impregnating every drop of water it meets with a powerful chalybeate, which might be converted into the most sanatory purposes. A smith's forge, with its red fires and sounding bellows, appropriately completes this attractive vignette. Who knows but that some new Cheltenham may spring up in this place, and people these rocks with gay inhabitants, drinking health from its fountain, and bracing their nerves with its mountain air? In truth, the landscape contains so much of what is sublime and beautiful, of wild and luxuriant, that it might in time rival the celebrated Moslem Springs of Izèperghè, and its "miraculous bath," so eloquently described by a fair authoress of our own day.

I was a little wearied with the length of the way, and one of the jaunting cars, every where to be found in the Principality, at this time coming up, I jumped in, and soon made acquaintance with the driver, a respectable man, the owner of the vehicle. I spoke warmly in praise of the scenery around, which is always acceptable to a native, and especially extolled the beauty of the river, which was here widening its channel, displaying something of the majesty of its sweep, as it approaches its estuary into the sea.

"Why, Sir," said my new friend, "I am told that this Conway you are talking about is the finest river in the world."

"It is a goodly river, indeed," I replied, "but surely not the finest that is to be found. There is even in our own island the magnificent Severn, and the still more noble Thames; there is also the Humber, that traverses so many

counties, and includes a navigation of nearly five hundred miles. But these are mere rivulets compared with what are to be found in the new world. There is the great St. Lawrence which runs an uninterrupted course of seven hundred miles, and the Missouri, into which twenty streams as large as the Conway empty themselves, and the Mississippi, that superb river, which, after flowing two thousand miles, pushes its full fresh stream three leagues from the shore before it mingles with the salt waters of the Atlantic."

The driver seemed astonished for awhile at the discoveries I had so unexpectedly made to him, beyond his own little world, in which he had lived, and moved, and had his being; but recovering himself, and nothing daunted, he took up the discourse again, and went on, "Ah, Sir, it is all very well *what you say*, but I was born on the Conway,—I have lived beside the Conway, man and boy, for these forty years,—and I don't believe *there is* another such a river, for length and width, in the known world."

The little village of TREFRIW, or Trevor, as it is pronounced by the country people, to which the flow of the tide reaches, does not deserve the character for neatness or picturesque beauty which is given to it by most tourists, except, indeed, as to the churchyard, and the handsome stone bridge that carries the road towards Llanrwst, with the busy mill and old-fashioned water-wheel hard by. The church is of very early date, and is said by the old manuscripts to have been originally built by Llewelyn the Great, "for the ease of his princess, who was before obliged to foot it to Llan Rychwyn, a long walk among the mountains." Ancient Yew trees are here to be found in their glory, which seem from their gnarled and venerable appearance to be co-existent with the old church. About fifty years ago, one of these patriarchs was blown down during a violent tempest, and there was found ensconced beneath its roots, and in a perfect state,

the skull of some giant of a former age, which the wondering rustics pronounced equal in capacity to a small bee-hive. Some other remains also, of corresponding size, were dug out of the same place, such as are said to be found by our antiquarians of the West, underneath those mysterious barrows that may so frequently be seen on the shores of the Ohio and the Mississippi.* This fact was related to me by an old crone of the village, and I recorded the wonderful story upon a table made out of the trunk of the fallen tree, which had acquired from its size and antiquity the title of the "Father of yews."

I reached Trefriw when the sun was beginning to suffuse the western sky with those hues of purple and gold which usually mark his farewell track at the close of a cloudless summer's day; but neither the weary way I had travelled, nor the warning signs of evening's approach, prevented me from entering upon the mountain road that leads to Llyn Geirionydd, or Lake Taliesin, as it is more generally called. This distinguished mountain lake is at the distance of about four miles from Trefriw, on the table land of this Alpine region, where its waters slept for ages in their stern solitude, save, indeed, when the echoes were awakened by the sweet harp of this "Chief of the Bards," or when the associate

* A very extraordinary discovery has recently been made in the State of Texas, which will go far to relieve the perplexities of the American literati on the subject of those earthy mounds and fortifications which have been traced from the state of New York to the Gulph of Mexico. "The Texas *Star* informs us, that 'a million of mummies have been found near Durango, in Mexico.' They are similar to the Egyptian mummies; and a poniard of flint, a sculptured handle, necklaces of ivory and beads, mocassins, &c. were also found at the same place. These, with the discoveries made in mounds, formed like pyramids, in several parts of North America, point to the conclusion that the New World had been peopled from Egypt, or from those parts of Asia over which Egyptian manners extend."—*Spectator*, p. 845, 1839.

minstrels of this land of song came to present to him their national address, and the impassioned poet, in true oriental style, replied—

"I am Taliesin, on the shores of the lake of Geirionydd."

A column has been reared by Lord Willoughby d'Eresby at the west end of the lake in honour of the sage, and at this time a handsome villa, and cottages, and smiling fields, may be seen round about it. The lake is of considerable extent, and affords some excellent fishing. This place is the frequent resort of pic-nic parties in the summer season, who raise their marquees on its margin, and enliven their visit with sports, and pastimes, and music, making the rocks re-echo far and near,

"In sounds by distance made more sweet."

Besides angling with the rod, the sportsman adopts a curious expedient for taking his game upon the lakes, which it may not be amiss to describe. He prepares a plank about a yard long and a foot wide, to which he affixes a slack yielding cord from end to end; to this he attaches a short line with a bunch of threads hooked and baited with flies of all colours and shapes, from the May Fly to the Yellow Cadow, and the apparatus thus finished he skims into the middle of the pool, altering its position at pleasure, or drawing it to land, by a string, when he has obtained a freight sufficient to satisfy his desires. The more adventurous fisherman takes his coracle and boldly pushes into the middle of the lake, where, by angling or netting, as may best suit his humour, he generally contrives, with skill and a moderate degree of patience, to fill his basket with the delicious trout with which these waters so plentifully abound.

I have just said that I *entered* upon the mountain path; for I had scarcely emerged from the forest of trees through which the precipitous road winds—trees of stout timber and

tall stems, pine, and elm, and oak, the growth of generations—when the grey twilight told me that it was high time to retrace my steps, if I wished to reach Llanrwst before the night set in. I could not, however, help pausing upon the altitude I had attained to view the dim landscape. A clearing in the forest enabled me to look down upon the vale that stretched before me in dreamy stillness, and to trace the course of the beautiful Conway, which still gleamed like a white silken thread along its sedgy bottom, amongst the fat meadows that lie on either side. I quickened my steps, however, for these rocky precipices and dun woods are not the places that a traveller would choose to be entangled in at nightfall; and as the bell from the ivied tower of the church mingled its heavy note with the murmurs of the river that runs close by its wall, I entered the town of LLANRWST, and took up my abode at the "Red Brick House," or, as the old chroniclers would have called it, the "red scarlette" house, ycleped the Three Eagles.

The Three Eagles at Llanrwst is truly a red, a very red brick house, and any tourist that may follow me will be sure to know it by this colour, without taking the trouble to look up at the black tripartite figure emblazoned on its front, which has received, I know not how, this royal name. However, I can testify that it possesses all the appliances which becomes a house of entertainment, where a stranger seeks to find his temporary home; that its larder is as well supplied, and its inmates as courteous as a wayfaring man like myself can possibly require.

The town of Llanrwst is on the Denbighshire side of the river, and from its central situation in a busy and thriving district, distant from any other mart, has become the little metropolis of the neighbourhood. It was formerly famous for its cattle fairs and peculiar manufacture of Welsh harps; but the branches of industry chiefly cultivated at present are

the spinning of woollen yarn, and knitting of stockings. Wales has often been spoken of for its national sobriety, and I was therefore startled to observe so many advertisements of temperance houses and coffee rooms in this place. They were, however, concentrated in the Market-place, or in the thoroughfares debouching from it, and I concluded the temptation to take "a little too much," as it is modestly called, was confined to these weekly seasons of excitement. There is nothing within the town particularly worthy of notice, except the church, which contains some interesting old monuments and tombs. Like many other religious structures of the darker ages of Christianity, its erection is connected with a tale of blood. The ground it stands on, according to tradition, was given by Rhun ap Nefydd Hardd, in expiation of the murder of Idwal, son of Owen Gwynnedd, cut off by Nefydd, his foster-father, to whose care he had been entrusted. In the interior of the church is some curious carving, said to have been brought from the neighbouring abbey; and the Gwydir Chapel, erected in 1633, by Sir Richard Wynne, from the designs of Inigo Jones, contains several engraved brasses, bearing portraits of different members belonging to this family, and which may be considered as choice specimens of the art of chasing in the seventeenth century. A slab of white marble, on the eastern wall, records the pedigree of the founder. On the floor, in the centre of the chapel, lies the stone coffin of Llewelyn ab Jorwerth, ornamented with carved quatrefoils, which has made more peregrinations than the tomb of "our Lady of Loretto,"—its first resting place having been the abbey of Aberconway, the next that of Maenan, and lastly the old parish church of Llanrwst, where for a while it was lost under a superincumbent heap of rubbish, from which it was at last rescued to occupy its present situation. Near the empty coffin is to be seen the recumbent figure of Howel Coytmor,

armed and mailed to the teeth, with his feet resting on a couchant lion. The singular monument on the southern wall will be sure to attract the attention of all visitors. It was erected to the memory of Sir John Wynne, but afterwards fell by neglect into a mutilated condition. It has, however, been recently restored by Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, and bears a centre slab, surmounted by an angel, and two pyramidal pillars, one profusely filled with flowers, and the other bearing shields with the heraldic emblems of the Gwydir Family. A marble monument in the church, raised to the memory of Mr. Thomas, of Jesus College, Oxford, a young gentleman of considerable promise, contains the following impressive lines:—

"It matters little at what hour o'the day
The righteous falls asleep; death cannot come
To him untimely, who is fit to die!
The less of this cold world the more the heaven—
The briefer life, the earlier immortality."

I must not forget to relate, that, besides its tombs and monuments, the Gwydir Chapel contains, suspended against the wall, the antique spurs which belonged to the notorious David ap Jenkin, the very Robin Hood of this neighbourhood, of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

The Bridge, constructed from the designs of Inigo Jones (who, though born in London, was by descent a Welshman), consists of three arches, the central one fifty-nine feet wide, the others much narrower. It was cotemporaneous in its erection with Gwydir Chapel, and is said to be constructed upon such nice principles, that if any force be directed against the middle stone, placed over the centre arch, a vibratory motion is communicated to the whole fabric. The granite blocks of which it is built, are now become grey with the lapse of nearly two centuries, and its architectural beauty richly harmonizes with the varied hues and forms of all

around. I stood on this bridge as I bade farewell to Llanrwst the following day, and enjoyed a splendid view up the river, which, in this direction, makes a bend for a considerable distance. Here, in the fishing season, may be seen great numbers of coracles, those *vitilia navigia*, or light boats, which, in the shallower streams of this country, supply the place of the *monoxula*, or canoes fashioned out of a single tree, that in the larger rivers, as in Greece and other countries, formed a first step towards a navy. A specimen of this singular kind of canoe, in which our ancestors fought against their more civilized enemies, may now be seen in the colonnade of the British Museum, with its benches and low bulwarks, almost complete. Here great quantities of salmon are taken; and in the months of February and March, great numbers of smelt.

I chose my route to Bettws y Coed by the road on the right of the river, because it contains many objects of great interest, and is besides in its retired sylvan character more to my taste. The road skirts the orchard grounds belonging to Gwydir Castle, and in less than half a mile turns sharply to the left, and between grove and mountain brings the traveller to this mansion, which is mainly interesting from its connection with the national and local events of the country. The entrance to the castle is through a court-yard, not now, as formerly, thronged with armed retainers ready to engage in the broils and bloody strife of its tumultuous history, but adorned with gay *parterres* of flowers, disclosing their peaceful beauties, and perfuming the atmosphere with their aroma. This mansion is irregular in its form, from the frequent alterations which have been made in its architectural arrangements. The apartments, however, contain many subjects of taste in the antique carvings with which they are enriched, representing subjects connected with the Roman conquest under Julius Cæsar. They contain also two elaborate speci-

mens of tapestry and needle-work, and several fine pictures from the pencils of Wouvermans and Borgognone, and other eminent masters; besides these there is to be seen the ancient manuscript, fairly written by the hand of that learned antiquary Sir John Wynne, which has been found so essential in authenticating many passages in the history of Wales. The original structure was raised by John Wynne ab Meredydd, and the date of its erection was in the year 1555. Its present possessor is Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, who is spoken of as a kind landlord and a benevolent man. My courteous *cicerone* took considerable pains to show me the curiosities of the place, and when I bestowed at parting the small gratuity which a wayfarer's pocket would afford, she did not regard it with the supercilious air with which, I well remember, a much larger one was contemplated by the stately dame of Penrhyn Castle, after the hasty survey I was enabled to take of that magnificent pile.

The gardens are laid out with that good taste which the noble proprietor displays, not only in the immediate neighbourhood of his own residence, but in the far-extended plantations which stretch for many miles over this fine estate. A spacious gravel walk leads to the elevated mural promenade which commands the lower part of the vale, to which the visitor is invited by an unrivalled group of ash and sycamore trees. Young cedars and dark yews here and there, singly or in groups, give variety and character to the less aspiring forms of blossoming shrubs and intermingling flower-beds.

In the little valley, Nant Bwlch yr Haiarn, at a short distance from Gwydir, is the cataract of Parc Mawr. The ascent to it is immediately from the road by a broad path cleared in the forest that thickly clothes the mountain side. It was the heyday of the feathered tribes, and the plaintive scream of a diminutive bird, the denizen of these woods, and which the natives call the Glaspar, resounded

through the solitude, mingled with the monotonous, but not unmusical, notes of the wood pigeon. The river which supplies the cataract is but of small volume, and though the descent is considerable, and the features of the surrounding scenery wild and picturesque, it does not possess those extraordinary attributes which belong to the celebrated falls of Porth Llwyd or Dolgarrog which I had visited the previous day. It would be unjust to the benevolent proprietor of this domain not to mention the provision he has made for the refreshment of the travel-worn pilgrim who may happen to pass this way. At a bowshot from Gwydir Castle stands the Fountain of St. Albright. The stream which at this place offers its cooling waters to the lip of the traveller, as it issues through the stone conduit, is supplied by a large cistern constructed for that purpose at a considerable distance up the mountain: an open elevated stone court, of semicircular form, stands close to the road side, backed by a strong wall of corresponding figure, surmounted in the centre by pedimental blocks: a narrow channel perforated in the wall opens a passage for the pure element, through which it issues all day long in one unceasing stream. The opening of the fountain to the public was celebrated by Lord Willoughby in a general invitation of all the poor old men and women of the neighbourhood to the hall, who were plentifully regaled with tea and cakes, and flowing flagons of good ale, and sent merrily home at night with a small portion of money in each of their pockets. To what calendar or gender the patron saint of this fountain may belong I know not, and therefore I laid no votive offering on the shrine; but I left my blessing on the head of the beneficent founder, of whose provision I had gratefully partaken, and only added a wish that the next time I should come that way he may have added a drinking bowl, to serve instead of the laurel leaf, which some ingenious wight had wittily inserted into the channel to guide the stream to the mouth of the traveller.



and uncared for, in every fissure that will afford them nourishment.

From hence the VALE OF THE LLUGWY continues to the Mymbyr lakes, near Capel Curig. In the centre of the scene the river holds on its course, dashing over all obstructions, now rushing through the narrow channel within its iron-bound steeps, and now gently flowing beside the rich woods, or circulating its refreshing waters through the open wide-spread meadows. On the left the indented front of Moel Siabod glimmers in the summer sunshine, offering from its summit extensive views; and far off, in the midst of a circling belt of mountains, rises the highest peak of Snowdon.



CHAPTER XII.

CAPEL CURIG—MOEL SIABOD—EXCURSION TO THE GLYDER FAWR AND LLYN IDWALL, AND OVER THE MOUNTAIN TO LLYN OGWEN.

"Th' embattled tower, o'ergrown with bearded moss,
And by the melancholy skill of time
Moulded to beauty, charms the bosom more
Than the rich palaces of princes.—Rocks,
Which raise their crested heads into the clouds,
Piled in sublimity, create a scene
More grand, more soothing to the pensive soul,
Than Rome with all its splendour."

The place called Capel Curig does not assume the appellation of *village*, for it consists only of a few cottages, a rustic chapel of ease belonging to the extensive parish of Llandegai, and a large and commodious inn arranged for the accommodation of visitors, which, from the many interesting objects in its neighbourhood, becomes the head-quarters of numerous travellers "in search of the picturesque." It stands at the junction of three valleys, one of which leads to Nant Frangon, another to Llanberis and Beddgelert, and the third to Bettws y Coed; and opens upon a pleasant garden, neatly and conveniently laid out, backed by a spreading

plantation of young and healthy timber. Capel Curig* derives its name from an anchorite called Curig, who travelled from the north of England and fixed his cell at this place in the sixth century. After his admission into the calendar, the effigies of this canonised saint, like those of his holy brother in Priestholme Island, were sold amongst the simple inhabitants as a sovereign remedy against evil spirits and inveterate disorders, as is translated from the original satire of Glyn Cothi, an eminent bard of these parts:—

> "Beneath his cloak the begging friar bore
> The guardian charm, grey Curig, to the door.
> Another Seiriol's healing image sold,
> And found the useful saints like modern gold."

The begging system still continues in Wales but under another form, and instead of the images of saints and martyrs, little pieces of ore are exhibited by the old women and children to tempt the money out of the stranger's pocket.

The harper was rapidly running his fingers over the strings of his Telyn when I entered the inn, and while I was satisfactorily engaged with some substantial refreshment, he entertained my ears with his somewhat scanty store of national minstrelsy.

Sundry steps lead the visitor across the garden enclosure into the open plain, in which, close at hand, are two lakes of unequal extent, with a boat moored at the side, tempting the angler into the midwaters to spin a minnow, or cast his May-fly before the eyes of the spotted trout with which they abound. From this spot is a magnificent panoramic view. Each object is on an extensive scale—the mountains are bleak, yet varied and picturesque; and, looking over the lakes, the highest peak of Snowdon is distinctly seen tower-

* Capel Curig is pronounced *Kapple Kerrig*, the *c* being always sounded hard in Welch. It is frequently incorrectly called by strangers *Kaypel Kewrig*.

ing into the clouds in the extreme distance. The air of the place is solemn and lonely, especially should the traveller hear at the same time, as was the case when I viewed it, the sweet and single note of the cuckoo, probably its last song before the return of another spring, reverberating

> "Like an echo that had lost itself
> Among the distant hills."

The high conical mountain called Moel Siabod rises near the inn, its base appearing almost within bowshot, and having its early steeps redeemed by industrious hands from the sterile rocks, smiling in verdure and specked with cottages, such as travellers have delighted to describe the sloping hills of Judea. It covers an immense space of country, and rises to an height of 2878 feet. The ascent is difficult, and sometimes dangerous, from the boggy nature of the surface of the ground, but it may be safely performed with a guide; and those who cannot accomplish the ascent of Snowdon, should, if possible, take Moel Siabod. The summit is covered in parts with immense pieces of rock, and from it are views of Snowdon, the Glyder Fawr, Carnedd David, and other eminences, portions of the counties of Denbigh and Merioneth, including numerous rivers and lakes. The distance from Capel Curig to the summit, although it appears so near, is quite four miles. On the eastern side of the mountain is a pool called Llyn y Foel, from which rises one of the tributaries of the river Conway, and on the western side are two of larger extent, joined by a short stream, called Llyniau Duwaunedd; from the larger one issues a river which runs past Dolwyddelan Castle, near which place it forms a junction with that before named.

From Capel Curig I determined on an excursion through the valley of the Mymbyr, and an ascent of the Glyder to Llyn Idwall, from thence over the mountain to Llyn Ogwen, and along the high road to the spot from which I started.

Leaving the inn after a savoury breakfast (for be it known to the traveller who, like myself, may be somewhat careless in these matters, that in this excursion, which will occupy at least eight or nine hours, no refreshment can be procured,) I took my way with an intelligent guide through the long valley of Dyffryn Mymbyr.* Soon the scene became wild and beautiful; the Glyder Bach rose on one side, and the shadow of the dark Siabod fell on the lakes on the other. Along the sides of the babbling river which feeds the lakes, and on patches of meadow, people were busy in their little hay harvest, the black massy barriers of hills being in striking contrast with the occasional green bright hues of the banks of the stream. Snowdon lay before me, with its blue, or rather purple peaks, softening downwards through every grade of colour till it terminates in the deep-brown and swarthy rocks in the foreground. Continually expanding and changing its aspects as we drew nearer,—the light haze moving round its summits, or resting midway in deeper volumes,—now obscuring and revealing different objects and points of view, blended with the character of the surrounding scenery, formed a most interesting scene.

After walking along the road—and a very pleasant road it is, from its many way-side beauties and objects of historic interest—as far as Pont y Gwryd, we commenced the ascent on our right; but met with so many difficulties from the bogs and quagmires, that we slowly retraced our steps to the "sure and firm-set earth" by the main road, and continuing our course along it about a quarter of a mile further,

* It is sometimes very difficult to obtain correct information of the names of particular localities, even from the natives and residents of the district themselves.—For instance, I heard the valley which runs from Capel Curig four or five miles towards Llanberis, and which is the one now described, successively denominated *Dyffryn Mymbyr,—Dyffryn y Gwryd,*—and the *Valley of Capel Curig.*

halted at a small public house called Pen y Gwryd, close by the junction of the macadamised routes that lead from Capel Curig, Llanberis, and Beddgelert. From this house we commenced the ascent of the Glyder Fawr, leaving the pool called Llyn y Cwm-ffynnon on our left. The surface of the ground for the first quarter of a mile was spongy and boggy; but presently we came to the steeper part of the hill, where high stones and rocks almost prevented our progress. No track was to be seen to direct our steps; for the hill is seldom traversed save by shepherds and the hardy miners of the district, and as it would be difficult and dangerous for a stranger to attempt the ascent alone, a guide should always be taken, and this precaution will also render the excursion easier and pleasanter. The Glyder hills entirely fill the space between the vales of Llanberis, Mymbyr, and Nant Frangon.

From the summit of the Great Glyder I marked the scenes through which I had passed on my previous wanderings through Snowdonia, spread on every side in extreme beauty and magnificence. To the west lay the vale and extensive lakes of Llanberis; on one side the barren heathy tract of Waun Oer and the Lesser Glyder, lighted up with meridian sunshine, and on the other the towering precipice of Clogwyn-du overhanging the dark waters of Llyn Idwall, the strangely indented Trifaen, the massy Carnedds of David and Llewelyn, and below the yawning chasm of Benglog opening into Nant Frangon, and the Ogwen pouring its clear waters through the deep glen beneath.

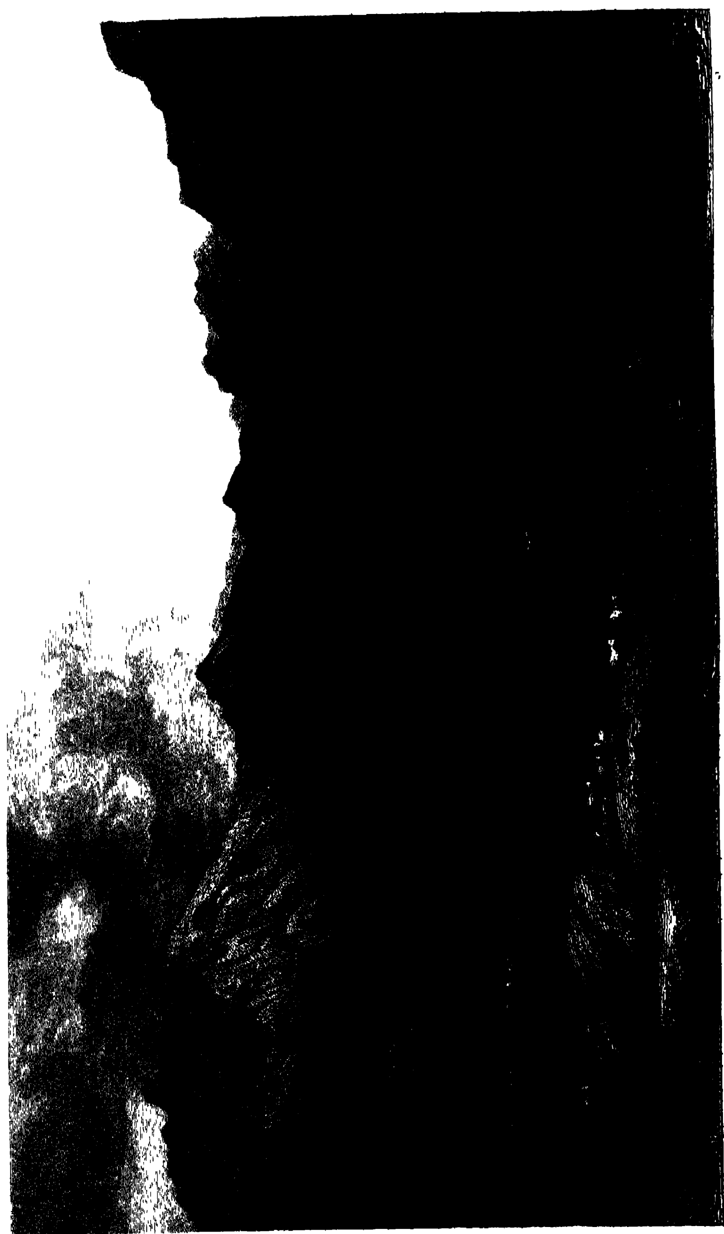
The surface of the ground upon which I stood had a most singular appearance. It seemed as if it had been washed by a tremendous sea; the stones lay loose, and strewn at hazard as on some wild coast; the rocks, bare, cloven, and jagged, crossed each other in different directions; while the huge, triple-headed Trifaen, with its sharp angular projections,

height above height, seemed like some huge monster, with human aspect strangely distorted, scowling upon the Carnedd y Gwynt, the Shepherd's Hill of Storms. And well to me indeed at that moment, appeared this tract of Snowdonia to have been thus designated, as I marked the traces of the tempest's far and fierce career around and on all sides, and the naked peaks that reared their grey crests to the clouds.

No where in the region of the higher hills had I observed deeper traces of the flood and the tempest than amidst these tremendous barriers of steep rocks and precipices which seemed to bid defiance to the steps of the most adventurous traveller. I was particularly struck with the bleak and stormy character of the scenery around the gloomy pool of Llyn Idwall, singularly situated in a hollow of the mountain summit. Restless as the sea although never much disturbed, and fiercely swept by the howling blasts, as I passed this lone and savage spot its aspect fell chill upon the spirits, and I felt how truly the popular feeling, which seldom errs, had given to this gloomy region the marked appellations of the 'Cold Mountain Waste,' and the 'Shepherd's Hill of Storms.'

Nor has popular tradition failed to throw round it the spell of superstitious terror, of heroic adventure, and romance. The mountain tenants in passing by the hollow of the lake, and beneath the beetling precipice of Castel Gafyr—the Fortress of the Goats—carefully shun the spot infamous for the murder of the young Prince Idwall, son of Owen Gwynedd, by the hands of his treacherous guardian; for some of the superstitious among them yet believe that his unappeased spirit is still heard wailing in the storm, or throwing a darker shadow over the black precipice of Twll-dû.*

* In other words, the Devil's Kitchen,—a horrid chasm in the centre of a tremendous precipice, extending in length about a hundred and fifty yards,



On the highest part of this mountain, two peaks stand forth like the stern commanders of ancient days in that refuge of rocks; or, it might be like triumphant travellers, calling from that proud eminence to their less enterprising companions, who were well content to trace their path along the vale beneath. In reality, however, these imposing personages which give such a picturesque and almost living effect to the scene, are only two isolated perpendicular pieces of rock, about fourteen feet in height and five feet asunder. Mr. Bingley, who ascended the Trifaen after visiting Llyn Idwall, states, that it was not only attended with difficulty but danger, and therefore not to be recommended. "Here," says he, speaking of the summit, "from the massy crag we contemplated the scene around us, which was rude as mountain horror can render it: we stood on a mere point, and on one side of us was a deeper precipice than any I had before seen."

The savage grandeur of the route over the Glyder, including the neighbouring lakes and minor hills, is not surpassed in Wales, and only seems to want those gangs of hungry wolves, which anciently prowled over these desolate districts before the time of Egbert, to realize their primitive barbarity. The surrounding mountains—Snowdon, Moel Siabod, the Trifaen, Carnedd David, &c.,—are among the highest in Britain. But a small proportion of tourists, however, avail themselves of the opportunity of observing the peculiar characteristics of scenes where Nature apparently reigns in untameable desolation. The descent is difficult and tedious, requiring from the traveller an unwearied foot and never-ceasing exertion. The toil of the adventurous pedestrian is nevertheless amply repaid from the scenes of extraordinary

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nearly one hundred in depth, and only six wide. It is open in a perpendicular line to the surface of the mountain. After heavy rain the water rushes through this fissure with great violence from a height of about one hundred yards.

interest which arise to excite his admiration, almost until he reaches the Holyhead mail-road in the gorge of the hills by Llyn Ogwen, which has been described in a previous chapter. When I once more attained this splendid road, which has long been the wonder of travellers from all parts of the world, winding as it does among the wildest passes and defiles of this wonderful land, I felt myself at liberty, with an emotion of conscious satisfaction, to retrace in my memory the slippery and dangerous path I had thus successfully trod. Like most travellers, after they have accomplished a task of great peril and difficulty, I had not advanced more than a mile on my way to the inn at Capel Curig, when I turned to take a parting view of the sublime region from which I had so recently descended. The rays of the evening sun were now glittering on the summits of the Trifaen mountain, throwing into bold relief those singular and strangely-marked indentions, which have given to this giant eminence its characteristic appellation of Tri-faen.

The journey to Snowdon from Capel Curig is rarely made except by the most hardy pedestrian, because of the distance from the inn to the point where it may be considered that the real ascent is commenced. On one occasion, however, I was tempted to make the excursion, and as the route possesses subjects of great interest peculiar to itself, I give it for the benefit of any wanderer who, like myself, may happen to be a sojourner at this pleasant place. Pursuing the route through the valley of the Mymbyr, at about a mile past Pen y Gwryd, on the road to Llanberis, I branched off to the left, and soon came to the small pool called Llyn Teyrn, taking the beaten track above Cwm Dyli and close to the south-eastern boundary of Llyn Llydaw, then westerly, leaving the Lliwedd (one of the buttresses of Snowdon) to the left, direct to Llyn Glaslyn; and thence by a difficult and circuitous route to the highest point—Y Wyddfa.



This ascent is very laborious, and has something of danger in it; but it is recompensed by scenes of extraordinary wildness and grandeur, over which Solitude seems to brood with undisturbed silence, scarcely ever broken by the wing of bird, or the voice of melody. It is a track, however, which the phytologist will find rich in specimens of that peculiar species of the vegetable kingdom, which the celebrated Linnæus has described by the pictural appellation of Ethereæ, a tribe only to be found in the higher regions of the air. At times indeed, my progress continued over almost perpendicular stones from rock to rock, or broad and high escarpments. In some places the path was loose and gravelly, in others a light elastic sward refreshed my weary foot, which was followed by a long slip as hard as adamant. Now and then a sudden and bold descent unexpectedly revealed one of those cwms or hollows so frequent in this mountainous region, in which a whole camp of the ancient Britons might have lain concealed from observation; and again rising from this seclusion, patches of level land spread themselves round some lake, or stretched along some green and solitary glen, watered with gurgling streams, disclosing their proximate beauties. In every direction prospects the most magnificent opened to view, and every crag which I surmounted was furnished with objects of picturesque effect, or deep and absorbing interest.

CHAPTER XIII.

LLANBERIS—SNOWDONIA—ASCENT OF SNOWDON—NANT GWYNANT—BEDDGELERT.

WHAT are high and impending rocks—what are the giant heavings of an angry ocean—and what the proudest summit of the Andes, when placed in the scale of such interminable vastness as the creating, balancing, and peopling of innumerable globes? In contemplating systems so infinite, who can forbear exclaiming—What a molehill is our earth, and how insignificant are we who creep so proudly on her surface!—*Bucke.*

LLANBERIS, with its vale and mountains, and above all, its deep and beautiful lakes, is an object which attracts a host of pilgrims from all lands to visit the northern part of the Principality. The usual plan is to take this celebrated spot *en route* from Carnarvon to Capel Curig or Beddgelert, or if convenience should serve, to reverse the order of the journey, and commence it from either of the latter places.

The reader will have perceived, that from Carnarvon I branched off westerly to Holyhead; this I did with the intention of taking Llanberis after Capel Curig, before going southward to Beddgelert and Merionethshire.

But to return, after retracing my walk along the valley of the Mymbyr, as described in the last chapter, as far as Pen y Gwryd, I left the Beddgelert road on my left, and proceed-

ing along in the direction of that leading to Carnarvon, enjoyed a magnificent view over the widely-extended vale and lake of Gwynant, with its surrounding alpine scenery, where one solitary sheep more fearless than another will now and then climb into the jagged fissures of the mountain, and subsist on the scanty herbage that occasionally presents itself. I was not long in reaching that part of the road most significantly denominated Gorphwysfa*—the resting place on the high ground. At this elevated spot the tremendous pass of Llanberis commences, extending about four miles through the defile, till the open valley, in which the village stands, is first revealed like the distant aperture of a railway tunnel. The open space at the end of this dismal pass, and which forms the upper or broad part of the valley, claims the title of Cwm Glas, or the Blue Vale. In days of yore a mere horse path led the adventurous traveller through this region of awful magnificence, leading over craggy rocks, with the mountain walls rising almost perpendicularly on each side, while millions of granite fragments of every size and shape, detached by some convulsion of Nature, lay scattered all around. Now, however, a most excellent road is formed all the way to Carnarvon, which in several parts is cut through the solid rock, and in others hewn out of its shelving sides, and secured from the inclination of the mountain by the soundest masonry. Even now immense masses of stone are strewn around, and about half way through the pass some of prodigious size, exhibiting the most eccentric forms and fantastic outlines, meet the eye in every direction. Within the gloomy shade of this wild glen are strange and deepened hollows, flanked by basaltic columns, as if some giant hand had

* From near Gorphwysfa two rivulets descend, one of which falls into the sea at Carnarvon after passing through the Llanberis pools, and the other running through the lakes of Gwynant and Dinas enters the ocean by Tremadoc.

been at work to form a dwelling place suited in architecture to the sublime and savage nature of the scene. Not a tree interposes to soften down the appalling features of this dreary waste, and only a few occasional patches of verdure, as though desolate and forsaken, shew themselves near the course of the noisy stream which accompanies, and now and then crosses, the road along the bottom of the ravine, between the frowning cliffs of Crib Goch and the Glyder Fawr. The lower part of the pass is the grandest, as from the declination of the road the mountains become thus apparently higher, and the scene consequently more gloomy and terrific. A traveller in exploring this pass, before the recent improvement in the road, has recorded in the most graphic manner this description of it:—"Occasionally gusts of wind, which now roared around us, swept away the pitchy cloud, that involved particular spots of the mountain, and discovered immediately below us, huge rocks, abrupt precipices, and profound hollows, exciting emotions of astonishment and awe in the mind, which the eye, darting down an immense descent of vacuity and horror, conveyed to it under the dreadful image of inevitable destruction."

Camden quaintly says—"These mountains may be truly called the British Alps; for besides that they are the highest in the whole island, they are, like the Alps, bespread with broken crags on every side, all surrounding one, which, towering in the centre, far above the rest, lifts its head so loftily, as if it meant not only to threaten, but to thrust it into the sky."

The village of Llanberis, the name of which is derived from Saint Peris,* who lived in the sixth century, lies near the head of the upper lake in a secluded situation, consisting

* Llanberis is pronounced *Chlanberis*, the ll not being sounded as thl, but with the guttural *ch* followed by l, as *chlan*; and the same refers to Llangollen, *chlangochlen*; Llanrwst, *chlanroost*; and Llyn, *chlin*, a pool or lake.



of a few humble dwellings, and having no object of particular interest to detain the traveller's attention. Its church is of the most primitive character, with only one pew in the interior of the building when I visited it, and the mortuary inscriptions are rudely carved on small slates. A walk of a few minutes along the shore of the upper lake, brought me to the Victoria Hotel, an extensive building erected by Mr. Asheton Smith, the proprietor of the neighbouring slate quarries, who employs nearly two thousand men in working them.

After I had dispatched a hearty meal, I hastened to explore the interesting objects around this extraordinary place—the waterfall, the tower, and the lakes. Within half a mile of the hotel, almost in a direct line across the road, and bearing to the right over a rustic slate bridge, I entered the mountain hollow of Cwm Brwynog, so named from the stream that passes through it. In this deep glen, crowned nearly on all sides with wild wooded rocks, the dashing cataract of Caunant Mawr, or the Great Chasm, suddenly bursts upon the view. It is not seen to advantage except after heavy rains, when it rushes over three projections measuring a descent of sixty feet, down rude jagged rocks into a terrific abyss, and from thence rolls foaming over the broad embedded strata into the vale below, swelling the waters of its romantic lakes. The roar of its precipitous fall—the flashing of its waters in the bright beam of a noon-day sun—the rising of its light foam glowing with prismatic colours—and the sequestered aspect of the spot in the very gorge of the glen, presented a scene that had in it something inconceivably wild, picturesque, and beautiful.

The two Lakes of Llanberis are of considerable extent, and are connected by the river Seiont, which passes through them. The upper one, sometimes called Llyn Peris, is about a mile in length and half a mile in breadth; the other, Llyn Padern, named after the founder of the ruined castle

hard by, is much longer, but not so wide. They are of great depth, descending in some parts one hundred and forty yards, and are reported formerly to have had abundance of red and golden char, and other fish; but these tenants of the waters have nearly disappeared, and to the angler the pools now afford little sport, from the injurious effect produced on them by the neighbouring copper works. These lakes have not the picturesque character belonging to Bala, Gwynant, and many other Welch pools, from the absence of the trees that adorn their banks; but the boldness and grandeur of the mountains on either side, which consist of bald, weather-beaten, eccentric rocks create a scene unmatched for vastness and sublimity throughout the island.

On a projecting eminence at the foot of the upper lake, stand the mouldering ruins of Dolbadern Tower, one of the few structures the remains of which are still left in the narrow passes of the hills. Dolbadern was the central fortress commanding the mountain passes into Anglesey, and strengthened the defences which the Snowdonian region afforded in the valiant and desperate struggles for national liberty. It is built in a circular form with hard, laminated stone and slate, strongly cemented with mortar; and from its structure seems to justify the theory of Mr. Rowland as to the early eastern origin of all British fortresses. The inner diameter measures twenty-six feet, its height is between eighty and ninety, and the thickness of its walls nearly eight. It appears to have had three stories, besides the vaulted basement used as a dungeon; and the broken steps by which I ascended showed that the communication was by a spiral staircase. That it stood many an attack, the tumulus of loose stones at the foot of the lower lake, and other remains of ancient fortifications, offer a sufficient proof. It was accessible only by a single causeway. By whom it was founded, or at what period, must still remain



a subject of conjecture. Mr. Pennant considers it the work of some Welsh prince, from whom, with the surrounding ground, it took its name; its erection, in this case, may be referred to the eighth or ninth century. The seat of feudal violence or revenge, a succession of hapless victims immured within its dungeon often filled the adjacent hills and valleys with cries of distress. Among these Prince Owen, called Owen Gôch, the Red, was held captive by his brother Llewelyn, against whom he had combined with his younger brother. They were defeated in a sanguinary conflict, and Owen paid the penalty of twenty years' solitary captivity in this tower. In the wars of Glendower it frequently changed masters, being always considered one of the master-keys into the interior of Snowdonia. Its ruins are now spread over the entire summit of the bold projecting rock, exposing to view the massy foundations of the exterior buildings and outworks, and the site of its once terrific donjon.

Moonlight came, and I beheld a prospect mirrored in the silvery waters softer and more serenely fair than can be seen in the glare of day. Vaster from their dimness, on both sides rose the rocky hills on which the moon shed a passing radiance, while a flood of liquid light rested on the bosom of the murmuring waters at my feet. The sound of the river pouring from lake to lake alone fell on the ear. But few objects now recalled ideas of the feudal war and ferocity which once steeped these peaceful valleys in blood; the cattle fed fearlessly by the water side, and two old horses,—as if in derision of those chivalrous times, and the proud caparisoned steeds which flew to conquest or the chase,—were quietly resting under the very walls of the once dreaded donjon tower of Dolbadern. The gloomy wildness of the distant view—the dark, stern aspect of the rocks above—the solitary tower in the pass of the vale—the mists rising over the lakes and hollows in the still evening light, now

offered a marked contrast to the vast and mingled splendours I had witnessed from the heights above, and presented images as strikingly novel as they were interesting.

The road circulating round the immediate area of Snowdon, may be estimated at about twenty-six miles, and includes the minor hills and eminences known by the names of the Lliwedd, Crib Goch, Clawdd Coch, and some others, which form the basement and support of the superior heights Y Wyddfa and Crib-y-ddysgyl. The district, however, generally known to tourists by the comprehensive title of SNOWDONIA, embraces so large a portion of Carnarvonshire that a rapid sketch of its mountains, lakes, rivers, and military stations, including those also more remotely connected with this romantic and picturesque portion of the county, becomes necessary.

Rising gradually and majestically from its northern rock-girt base, Snowdonia embraces within its limits a distinct region of subject hills, valleys, and lakes, stretching across the county in one vast chain from sea to sea. It was formerly considered, in fact, to comprise within itself a little kingdom; the Barons of Snowdon were the most potent lords of the soil, and the seignory of its bold domain was always the most severely contested and the last resigned. On these British Alps, as they have been called, Edward the First celebrated his final triumph over the ill-fated Llewelyn in festivals and hunting matches, and assembled the chivalry of Europe to do their *devoirs* to the Queen of Beauty, in jousts and tournaments upon the plains which it overlooks. This same monarch often made it his summer residence; it was chosen as the congress of the native princes, and of the bardic contests,—and palaces and hunting seats animated its wooded and well-peopled eminences. Now a comparatively barren wilderness of heights spreads before the eye; naked massy ridges still rear their natural barrier against the



skies, but most of the military stations, castles, and towers, which made them formidable, and all the seats of pleasure and diversion, are seen no more.*

Improved by art, this position required only a powerful navy to have maintained the independence of the Britons from those fierce marauding nations which attacked it incessantly. The passes into the country were defended by the strongholds of Deganwy on the Conway, of Caerhun on the Pass of Bwlch y ddaufaen,—the Castles of Aber and Dolwyddelan,—the strong forts in Nant Frangon, in Nant Peris, Cedwm in Nant Tall y Llyn, and the Castles of Harlech and Criccaeth to secure the open sands of Traeth Mawr. There were towers also at Casail Gyfarch, Dolbenmean, besides military posts and fortifications in the more exposed positions of the country.

The Snowdonian range extends from the sea-washed heights of Penmaen Mawr in a succession of lofty hills westerly to the triple-headed Reifell, which borders upon the Bay of Carnarvon; and branching southerly, the range includes Moel Hebog, and Mynydd y Gorllwyn, near Tremadoc. Its highest peak towers about three thousand six hundred feet above the ocean. The Carnedds, called Llewelyn and David, approach next in height; Moel Siabod the third; and, however inferior to the Alps—to the stupendous Andes—to the Cordilleras,—and the Himalaya of other hemispheres, these British Alps partake sufficiently of the magnificent to impress the beholder with feelings of awe and admiration. If not on the largest scale, they can yet boast almost every variety of the noblest characteristics of mountain scenery—even to the terrible. In their darker hour,

* The ancient and extensive forest of Snowdon was felled by the Saxon Monarchs. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, the civil list was charged with the sum of £11. 8s., being the "Annual Fee of the chief Forester of Snowdon."

when the storm is up,—when the torrent pours its hoarser music with the autumnal blasts, and the near voice of the thunder,* and the deep rolling masses of mist, convey the impression of some region seated among the clouds,—no traveller of other lands will pronounce Snowdon destitute of images at once eminently beautiful and sublime.

The rivers of Carnarvonshire although numerous are not of considerable breadth or length, and most of them run from the mountains on which they rise to the sea, owing to the peninsular form of the county. The principal are the Conway, which has the most extended course, and taken altogether is, perhaps, the most picturesque, for its descent is rapid and frequently broken; it flows from Llyn Conway, and is swelled by the waters of numerous streams, including the Machno, the Lledr, and the Llugwy, and joins the ocean near Conway. The Glaslyn rises on the eastern side of Snowdon, and carries its course through lakes Gwynant and Ddinas before it receives the tributary waters of the Colwyn at Beddgelert, and then running southerly enters the sea by the extensive sands called Traeth Mawr. The Gwrfai and the Seiont have their sources on the western side of Snowdon, and fall into the Menai Straits; the former flowing through Llyn Cwellyn, and the latter through the Llanberis pools. The Llyfni rises from boggy land by Drws y Coed, and passing through the lakes of Nantlle, falls into Carnarvon Bay. The Ogwen, issuing from Lake Ogwen, winds through the sterile region of Nant Frangon, and enters the sea near Penrhyn Castle.

There are about fifty lakes in Carnarvonshire, the majority of which are not above half a mile in circumference, but many vary from one mile to three. The most romantic, and consequently the objects of more frequent research, are Llyn Ogwen, at the head of Nant Frangon; Llyn Idwall, near the Trifaen Mountain; Llyn Gwynant and Llyn y Ddinas, on the road between Capel Curig and Beddgelert;

the two sequestered lakes of Nantlle, which lie in a picturesque vale westward of Llyn Cwellyn; the Llanberis lakes; the Llyn y Gader and Llyn Cwellyn on the road between Beddgelert and Carnarvon. Mr. Pennant says, "the quantity of water which flows from the lakes of Snowdonia is very considerable; so much, that I doubt not but collectively they would exceed the waters of the Thames, before it meets the flux of the ocean."

On one occasion, while staying at the Victoria Hotel, I determined to commence the ascent of Snowdon at such an early hour as would afford me the prospect of a glorious sunrise from the top of that lofty mountain. For this purpose I engaged a guide, whom I ordered to be in readiness the following morning, and at the appointed time, after some hasty refreshment, we started on our way before daybreak, taking care to provide the edibles, ycleped brandy and biscuits, necessary for a day's sojourn upon the hills.

After a wearisome walk we reached the stone work on the highest point, but only to meet with disappointment, for thick mists invested the pinnacle of Y Wyddfa, and the sun rose in murky gloom. The cold was intense, and I was almost disposed to beat a quick retreat from this comfortless situation, but my companion prevailed on me to remain, assuring me, from his long experience, that the morning might yet prove to be remarkably fine. He was correct in his prognostication, and a day of wonderful revelations rewarded me for this exercise of patience.

After waiting for nearly two hours the heavy clouds moved forward in tempestuous eddies, and for a few minutes the scene was without any parallel for its novel and sublime character. The objects immediately surrounding me, and the summits of the loftier hills, appeared to roll with the surge of the sweeping and dispersing fogs. As they slowly debouched, column after column, the horizon began to clear, and the splendid scenery below disclosed itself more dis-

tinctly. The sun breaking forth from his pavilion of clouds illuminated the mural steeps of the Lliwedd, and shed a sudden radiance over the lakes and vales below.

The panoramic views presently became more grand and extensive. Far as the eye could reach, a vision of wondrous power and beauty unfolded itself, awakening new thoughts and feelings in the soul, which trembled while it exulted in tracing the startling and majestic characters stamped by an Omnipotent hand upon these his glorious works. The atmosphere became perfectly clear; the day, magnificently beautiful, displayed the most distant objects to the far-off horizon of the sea, in the most brilliant and varied illuminations. The red veins of Crib Goch reflected back a stream of sanguine rays as quick and fierce as those which glittered upon his ridge. The singular and fantastic forms of these rocky formations, either primitive or time-worn, pinnacled or projecting, running off in bold escarpments, or shelving into sheet-like floors of granite —sometimes yawning in chasms too deep for the light of summer sun to reach, or rounded into amphitheatres that might have formed the council hall of a race of giants —gleaming in their hues of grey, green, and purple, lying in ribbon streaks, or mingling in rich combination—all, all, lay immediately around me. The loftiest points of England, Scotland, and Ireland, were not merely shadowed forth, but were seen; while the Isle of Man, sparkling with ocean lights,—the Menai, running like a silver thread in a web of verdure,—and Anglesey, with her hills and coasts, appeared to be spread like a map before the eye. The impression was that of a world of solitude stretching out in a succession of prospects, fading into distant softening vistas, as agreeable to the eye as to the imagination, and looking like the *val sans retour* of fairy land.

The descent from Snowdon into the vale of Llanberis offers

many picturesque views, but they are not so interesting or majestic as those on the side of Capel Curig or Beddgelert. A great part of the way is monotonous; but this, in some degree, served to heighten the pleasure of reaching in safety the delightful scene around old Dolbadern Tower, which had presented itself under many aspects, with varied effects, from different points upon the hills.

CHAPTER XIV.

LLANBERIS TO BEDDGELERT—ASCENT OF SNOWDON FROM BEDDGELERT—NANTLLE—TREMADOC—TAN Y BWLCH.

Ye crags and peaks I'm with you once again!
O sacred forms, how proud you look!
How high you lift your heads into the sky!
How huge you are! how mighty and how free!
How do you look, for all your bared brows,
More gorgeously majestical than kings
Whose loaded coronets exhaust the mine!
Ye are the things that tower, that shine—whose smile
Makes glad—whose frown is terrible—whose forms,
Robed or unrobed, do all the impress wear
Of awe divine—whose subject never kneels
In mockery, because it is your boast
To keep him free.

Sheridan Knowles.

The road from Llanberis to the secluded scenery around Beddgelert presented a continued succession of sublime and picturesque views. Retracing my former walk through the Pass, and as far as Pen y Gwryd, fresh vistas of hills, and vales, and waters, opened in all their variety upon the eye as I advanced. Here and there the broad black shadow of some rock threw its sombre hues upon my path; while the flashing cataract, or the glittering spar-veins, glowing in the sun, offered in other parts as marked a contrast and relief.

Soon I entered the charming and picturesque valley called Nant Gwynant, about six miles in length, through a portion of which the road is carried by a cutting along the eastern side, forming part of the base of the hills connected with Moel Siabod. Formerly the rich, abundant woods, the sparkling streams, and all the happiest interchange of the most varied mountain scenery, gave it the distinctive title of the Forest of Snowdon. And well, at that moment,—as I marked the thousand beauties spread around me in the mellow autumnal tints, the softened lights of the purple peaks, and the serene sky,—did it seem to deserve the name, and to awaken those touching associations which it is difficult, amidst scenes long deserted and again revisited, not to indulge. Before me, in the distance to the left, lay the picturesque old bridge, with its noisy weir and sweeping stream, appearing, at the moment, no unapt emblem of the vain turmoil, the swift passing shadows of mortal emptiness and pride.

It was here that the union of stream, and lake, and fall, so peculiarly the features of the Carnarvon hills, most struck my mind, giving that nameless charm to a solitary ramble which more than compensates for the loss of companionship, or the most arduous pedestrian toil. The fresh breath of morning fanned my brow—some new beauty continually broke upon the eye—the first red leaves blown across my path, or whirling in eddies down the currents, told the evening of the year was nigh; and the blue mists on the distant hills—the beautifully variegated foliage of the trees,—the fragrant dew yet glittering on leaf and flower, with the early matin song of birds,—the wind whistling through the mountain hollows, and the far-off sound of the cataract,—all combined to inspire a freshness and elasticity of feeling which only the morning traveller can intensely enjoy.

Lake Gwynant is about a mile in length, and at its upper

end nearly half that measure in breadth. About its margin are green pastures, with sufficient trees and foliage to create a scene on which Solitude and Beauty have impressed their deepest features, and over which, from the surrounding rocks, Wildness and Grandeur frown with an aspect almost terrible. High as my expectations had been, they were more than realized. Nant Gwynant and its lake seemed well denominated the Vale of Waters,—the most lovely of all Snowdon,—comprehending as it does within itself some one or other charm peculiar to all the Cambrian vales. The majestic calm and beauty of the hills appeared mirrored in the waters at their feet, which glowed with mellow radiance; while afar off the music of the flashing falls alone broke on the deep solitude and silence. Innumerable variegated hues caught from the serene refulgent skies, contrasted with the dusky shadows of the rocks, painting every object,—now bright, half hidden, or deeply obscured,—some changing feature continually surprising the eye.

Proceeding onwards near the border of the clear stream which joins Llyn Gwynant with the waters of Llyn Dinas, I reached that point where the road crosses the Gwynant, which afterwards flows to the left. It is from this spot that the regal mountain may be seen on the right, towering beyond the intervening rocks; and soon afterwards I approached the pleasant domain of Plas Gwynant, with its screen of waving woods, and its green spreading lawn approaching nearly to the water's edge. Half a mile beyond this place is Llyn Dinas itself, with its own scenes of beauty and interest, as deeply shadowed among the towering hills as Lake Gwynant.

The road runs along the northern shore of Llyn Dinas for about a mile, and then nearing the vicinity of Beddgelert, the traveller will observe on his right the remarkable rock of Dinas Emrys, insulated and wooded,—one of those monuments which carries the thoughts back to the days of genuine



British fable and romance. Its height, its steepness, and the large stone ramparts yet visible, still point it out as the retreat of the feeble Vortigern, who, shrinking from the daring task which his treachery had planned, vainly hoped to screen himself from its consequences.

The no less singular rock-girt mass adjoining to it, and known as the Groves or Caves of the Magicians, offers a curious subject for speculation, which may be pleasantly indulged by perusing some of our early British chronicles. A portion of these quaint narratives, appertaining to the origin and uses of these religious abodes, with the gigantic labours and superstitions of our forefathers, possesses both imaginative and historical interest, and no slight fund of anecdote and amusement. Tradition records that King Vortigern, or his successor, bestowed the rocky hummock upon the favourite soothsayer whose name it bears. By the Welsh it is called Merddin Emrys; and on its summit, we are assured that the learned astrologer expounded the secret wisdom of the skies to the trembling monarch: and his exploits may still be read, to the no small gratification of lay and clergy, in the curious notes upon Drayton by the no less learned Selden. And thus it is said or sung:—

> "Here prophetic Merlin sate, when to the British King,
> The changes long to come auspiciously he told;
> And from the top of Brith, so high and wondrous steep,
> Where Dinas Emrys stood, shewed where the serpents fought—
> The white that tore the red, from whence the prophet wrought
> The Britons' sad decay then shortly to ensue."

As I drew nigh the little hamlet of Beddgelert, and passed the weir by its old flour mill, I was struck with the sublime aspect of the mountain scenery—particularly of Craig Llan, which rose almost perpendicularly on the left, and of Moel Hebog which towered behind the inn. The expanding hills cast a broad and deep shadow across my path, while rock and

stream, assuming a thousand varied and brilliant colours, told me that I was once more amidst the favourite scenes of my boyhood; and Beddgelert revisited, inspired a feeling of tranquil delight not inferior to that with which it was at first beheld. Absence, and long-continued residence in cities, when they do not quite obliterate younger emotions, and the early love of nature and rural life, give assuredly a fresh zest to their charms.

The pleasant site of Beddgelert, in the heart of these bold romantic hills,—its smooth green meadows and pleasant streams, its sylvan beauty, and the rich contrast of the scenes by which it is surrounded, with its many varied objects of interest sufficient to amuse every taste,—came more fresh upon the mind and the eye after the agreeable excitement of my recent wanderings. It was here, after many days of long and toilsome ramble among the Carnarvonshire hills, I was prepared truly to enjoy a brief repose, although I never felt less weary than when I wound my way along the river to the spot where the three valleys meet. It had the same serene and quiet pastoral look as when I visited it years before; and it was with renewed pleasure that I watched the murmuring confluence of the Gwynant and the Colwyn; and the river Glaslyn, formed by these streams, afterwards flowing through scenery highly romantic, beyond the wild falls and rocky breaks which surround Pont Aber-Glaslyn.

The afternoon of my arrival at Beddgelert was devoted to the enjoyment of its hospitable cheer with a few fellow pedestrians I there met, to the luxury of repose, and the pleasure of unexpectedly spending it with a companion of my school days. We had a delightful little banquet, at which social wit and good humour presided, with that pleasant idleness one most enjoys after laborious toil, whether physical or intellectual. I felt the force of Professor Wilson's remark, when I met him in his angling days at Ambleside, "that to



relish these moments of reaction with true zest, one must be out at least three days among the upper hills, and get a good sprinkling of the heavens." The well-remembered hours I there spent in his fascinating society—where fishing, boating, and rambling were all his delights, though they ill disguised the repressed fires of eloquent genius and true poetry which glowed beneath the surface; and with Mr. Wordsworth, then in his little cottage on the banks of Grassmere, above five and twenty years ago, came vividly back to mind as I sat with my old friend and recent pedestrian acquaintance in the comfortable inn at Beddgelert.

Nothing was wanting to complete the charm of the hour, and it is accordingly marked in the grand archives of the hotel—deposited, of course, with the excellent host of the 'Goat,'—as one of the whitest days of my Welsh wanderings. And it deserves to be among the pleasantest of my recollections, for the Hotel is assuredly one of the most courteous and obliging, as well as the neatest in Cambria. To estimate, however, at the full value its excellent accommodations, the gratifying attentions of the good-humoured host and the exquisite flavour of his viands, the stranger should take a walk of some fifteen miles over the hills before dinner. He will then find the appliances and embellishments of the intelligent landlord, the most judicious and elegant in the world, and, after his heroic pedestrianism, he will partake of the "*otium cum dignitate*,"—Anglice, a good table, the best wine and attendance, with the best grace imaginable. How active exercise improves the flavour of fresh-stream trout, of mountain mutton, and the pleasure of a siesta and a cigar beneath the shade of trees beside the murmuring Glaslyn, it were needless to relate!

The views immediately around Beddgelert, though described by successive travellers as admirably adapted to inspire religious meditation by the bleak "sombre character

of the mountains, whispering groves, and tumbling waters," were far from producing similar impressions on my mind; in part, perhaps, owing to the conversation of my friend, and a glorious sunset, which threw an enlivening splendour on every object far and near. So little was I "in the mood," that I put off my visit to the faithful Gelert's grave, and to the little village church, till the ensuing morning, and took my way towards the rude, picturesque-looking mill, with its noisy stream and rock-strewn bed. Its modern use and antique appearance seem sufficiently at variance; but its lonely site, its rustic air, the dashing of its waters, with the whole scene around and beyond, are such as to arrest the eye of the painter. Though many of the cloud-capped rocks towering above no longer wear the noble mantle of their patriarchal oaks, they give a wildness and grandeur to the picture, especially when beheld from an eminence above the village, which no eye can behold with indifference.

The Church at Beddgelert is erected on the site of an ancient Priory of Augustine Monks. These holy fathers, it appears, belonged to that class of *religieuse*—assuredly the most sociable—called Gilbertines, and consisted of persons of both sexes, who resided under the same roof, divided, however, by a wall; and there is a piece of ground, not far from the spot, which still goes by the name of Nun's Meadow. Part of the arches and clustered columns which supported the nave of the Priory are still visible in the wall of the church, and outside are remains of ancient building which show that the Priory was one of considerable extent.

Being desirous of obtaining admission to the interior, I looked round and observed a diminutive figure with peculiar eyes looking intently at me, and making strong signs for me to desist in trying to unfasten the gate. He had a large key at his girdle, to which he pointed significantly, and put his

hand upon his pocket with a broad grin, which said, plainer than words, *here* is the true *sesime*, the only legitimate way of entrance, and brandished the church key with an air of exultation, as if in all the joyous foretaste of clutching a sexton's fee. But I had almost as well have spared my pains and my pocket; for the interior of this loftiest church of Snowdonia, as Mr. Pennant designated it, has nothing half so conspicuous as the names of some rich pew proprietors often times repeated, with a large tablet commemorating their Christian generosity in apportioning the remaining space to the use of the poor. On the east side the window, consisting of three narrow lancet openings, gives the church an antique air; the font is of blue stone of very rude character, and undoubtedly of early origin. Two eminent bards were interred in Beddgelert* Church, Rhys Gôch Eryri and Dafydd Nanmor, who both flourished in the fifteenth century. We are informed by Rymer, that it was originally founded by Llewelyn, to commemorate the preservation of his son, and as some atonement for slaying his preserver (the faithful greyhound), from whose name and tomb, tradition assures us, the village received its name. How beautifully the entire incidents to which it refers,—the noble picture of the chase,—the contrast of feelings,—the uncontrollable rage of the father against the faithful dog,—the discovery,—and the grief of Llewelyn,—have been illustrated by Mr. Spencer in his admirable ballad I need not here remind the reader.

My walks among the Snowdon hills form part of the most agreeable recollections of my life. Although years had elapsed since I last beheld the scenes amidst which I now wandered, the impression on my imagination was as pleasing and exciting as it had ever been. The love of coast and mountain scenery imbibed during an early period of my

* Beddgelert is pronounced *Bethgelert*, the *dd* always being sounded as *th*.

boyhood, required not, in maturer years, the spell of historical association, or of yet wilder tradition, to give force to the sentiment; and if I was then an enthusiast for pedestrian rambles, I was still as eager to pursue them for the more invigorating delight they afforded me, and the energy of mind and frame which, after a slight seasoning, I invariably found them to impart. I had this time twice traversed the greater mountains of this picturesque region, and my desire of exploring fresh paths and trying longer excursions was unabated, till I began to think as lightly of accomplishing twenty or thirty miles before evening as I had, at one period, thought of four or five.

The cordial meeting to which I have before alluded, not only called up in my companion and myself the charm from memories richly stored with tales of past travel, but led to a community of purpose for the brief future in which we might walk in brotherhood together. We therefore determined to climb the mountain in company; and I was the more disposed to do so, because the ascent from this place is one of great interest. It was in the prime of a fine forenoon that we started from our *hospitium* for the summit of Snowdon, by the route usually called the Beddgelert ascent, which takes the high road towards Carnarvon for three miles, and then turns to the right near an immense stone known by the name of Pitt's Head, from its fancied resemblance to the profile of that statesman. We followed the winding path to the farm yard at Fridd, and then taking the beaten track, went leisurely along till we came to a sheepfold not far from the Lechog. Here, amid the lone majesty of Nature, we paused for breath, and remained for a time in the contemplation of the surrounding scene, wild, varied, and fearful. Having gathered refreshment from our rest, we gradually laboured up the steep ascent, and occasionally turning to take a retrospect of our progress, experienced new pleasure from the

increasing variety and extent of the prospects, the strange contrasts formed by bare rocks and heathy valleys, and the sudden harmonies and shifting effects which the different objects, as they caught the light or were flung into shadow, continually presented; while the higher parts of the surrounding hills, and the monarch of this mountain realm himself, were occasionally hid from sight, bathed in thick clouds and vapours.

In a short time, however, we reached the narrow path, on that portion of the mountain called Clawdd-coch (the red ridge), where the precipitous rock overlooks Cwm y clogwyn, the hollow which includes the waters of Llyn Coch, Llyn y Nadroedd, Llyn Glas, and Llyn Flynnon y Gwas. Kneeling on a mossy bank, we ran down in our vision the path by which we had ascended, and viewed below us the valley enlivened by the Gwrfai and the lakes Cwellyn and Gader, from whose shores rise the eminences of Craig Goch and Mynydd Mawr,—between which mountains lie the romantic valley and lakes of Nantlle, and beyond them the expanding waters of Carnarvon Bay. To the north lay the town and castle of Carnarvon, the Menai Straits, the whole island of Anglesey, and the sea surrounding it; while southerly the scene included the mountains of Moelwyn, Rhinog Fawr, and Cader Idris, and the Merionethshire coast as far as Towyn.

The gloomy and barren aspect of the hills is sometimes relieved by the variety of hues produced by mineral formations; and Snowdon is rich in the number and beauty of its heaths and flowers, affording a pleasant field for botanical research. Few regions will be found to supply more curious and interesting specimens for investigation to the adventurous naturalist; and he may find a sure source of unfailing pleasure in the rare productions which are to be found about the higher lakes and hills. Not a few, indeed, are to be met with in no other district of Britain; and, most probably, ere

yet despoiled of his floral and forest honours, Snowdon boasted more beautiful and varied, as well as more numerous, specimens of the different tribes of vegetable nature.

The conspicuous crown of all our toil—the Wyddfa—now rose in grandeur before us, and beyond it the serrated ridge of Crib y ddysgyl, or the Dripping Stone, in strong relief with the broad spreading Lliwedd which lay on our right. The external barrier of Y Clawdd terminating in lofty ridges, jagged and narrow, filled up the outline of the stupendous hills I had traversed in three different ascents, but with increasing delight and wonder. The weather, cold and gusty for the season, gave fresh enchantment to the varying aspect of the clouds and shadows, especially of the upland lakes and valleys, rising in a succession of little regions within regions, resting calm and beautiful in the lap of the mighty hills. From the towering precipice I beheld, through the deep hollows and ravines, a series of panoramic beauties,—hills crowning hills, and vales and lakes upon different levels most picturesquely connected with each other.

Once again I was on the summit of Snowdon! I stood on the peak called the *Conspicuous*, where I long tarried to behold the surrounding scenes under the changing aspects which the day might afford. From this pinnacle I saw the heavy mists rolling in volumes along the sides and summits of the hills, and at times sweeping round and below us, producing the appearance of our being enveloped in clouds. The prospect at that moment was bleak and wild in the extreme; and the sudden gusts, rushing at intervals through the glens and hollows produced a strange unearthly sound, mingling with the distant blasting of the mines, and the cry of the raven wheeling above our heads.

Screening myself from the wind, I took from my wallet a volume of Bucke's delightful work on the Beauties, Harmonics, and Sublimities of Nature, and turning to the chap-

ter on mountains, read his elegant but brief account of a visit to Snowdon, from which I extract the following:—

"After climbing over masses of crags and rocks, we ascended the peak of Snowdon, the height of which is 3571 feet above the level of the Irish sea. Arrived at its summit, a scene presented itself magnificent beyond the powers of language! Indeed language is indigent and impotent, when it would presume to sketch scenes on which the great Eternal has placed his matchless finger with delight. Faint are thy broad and deep delineations immortal Salvator Rosa!—Powerless and feeble are your inspirations genius of Thomson, Virgil, and Lucretius!*

"From this point are seen more than five and twenty lakes. Seated on one of the crags, it was long before the eye, unaccustomed to measure such elevations, could accommodate itself to scenes so admirable:—the whole appearing as if there had been a war of the elements; and as if we were the only inhabitants of the globe permitted to contemplate the ruins of the world. Rocks and mountains, which, when observed from below, bear all the evidences of sublimity, when viewed from the summit of Snowdon, are blended with others as dark, as rugged, and as elevated as themselves; the whole resembling the swellings of an agitated ocean."

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* "Petrarch had long wished to climb the summit of Mount Venoux, a mountain presenting a wider range of prospect than any among the Alps or Pyrenees. With much difficulty he ascended. Arrived at its summit, the scene presented to his sight was unequalled! After taking a long view of the various objects which lay stretched below, he took from his pocket a volume of St. Augustine's Confessions, and opening the leaves at random, the first period that caught his eye was the following passage:—"Men travel far to climb high mountains; to observe the majesty of the ocean; to trace the sources of rivers; but they neglect themselves." Instantly applying the passage to himself, Petrarch closed the book; and falling into profound meditation, "If," thought he, "I have undergone so much labour, in climbing this mountain, that my body might be nearer to Heaven, what ought I not to do, in order that my soul may be received in its immortal regions."

"The extent of this prospect appears almost unlimited. The four kingdoms are seen at once; Wales, England, Scotland, and Ireland! forming the finest panorama the empire can boast. The circle begins with the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland; those of Ingleborough and Penygent, in the county of York, and the hills of Lancashire follow; then are observed the counties of Chester, Flint, and Denbigh, and a portion of Montgomeryshire. Nearly the whole of Merioneth succeeds; and, drawing a line with the eye along the diameter of the circle, we take in those regions stretching from the triple-crown of Cader Idris to the sterile crags of Carnedds David and Llewelyn. Snowdon, rising in the centre, appears as if he could touch the south with his right hand, and the north with his left."

In the light of a splendid sunset which now began to illumine all the heights, the nearmost hills and vallies glowed with softer and warmer colours; the numerous lakes and streams spread at our feet, losing the dull, black hues reflected from the impending rocks, where suffused with the departing radiance poured upon the summits,—a deeper and fresher verdure seemed to clothe vale and glen, and, in the dying glory of the sun-light, the sea beyond shone red and dazzling like a mirrored fire.

The gradual twilight brought a succession of no less interesting changes of scenic beauty, and convinced me, that to know Snowdon the traveller ought to remain upon its hills considerably longer than is usually done. I had noticed a succession of visiters who arrived, as if making a morning call, and, like "shadows that come and go," seemed quite as eager to depart. But there was a pedestrian from the lochs of Scotland of a different character, to whom I related my morning's progress, and he observed, with enthusiasm, that in no part of his tour had he found greater enjoyment than

in his walks through Wales.* We now began our descent, and making the best of our way back to Beddgelert, we reached the inn just before darkness enveloped every surrounding object. It may serve as a guide to strangers to know, that the distance from Beddgelert to the summit of Snowdon is about six miles.

When I had retired to rest, after the fatigues of this laborious day, I fell into a profound reverie, and again the successive marvels which I had witnessed passed in review before my mental eye. I pictured to myself Snowdonia's proud baronial domain, enriched and decorated as it had been in its ancient times, when it became the beloved resort of its native princes and the pride of its conquerors. I imagined it adorned with spreading groves—wide and lovely gardens round palace and lady's bower—the lordly castle towers frowning afar—the Hill of Council—the assemblies of chiefs and bards—the gay hunters clad in green and gold, with the then victorious last of the Llewelyns at their head, his favourite hound bounding at his side, and the opening echoes among the distant hills. I saw him presiding at some solemn festival, surrounded by the chivalry of the land, such as took place in his magnificent castle near Aber, which the painter has here attempted to depict; while the same aged bard who afterwards sang his dirge, was then commemorating his early exploits—and the wassail bowl circulated amidst the shouts of mirth, and the pledges of fidelity.

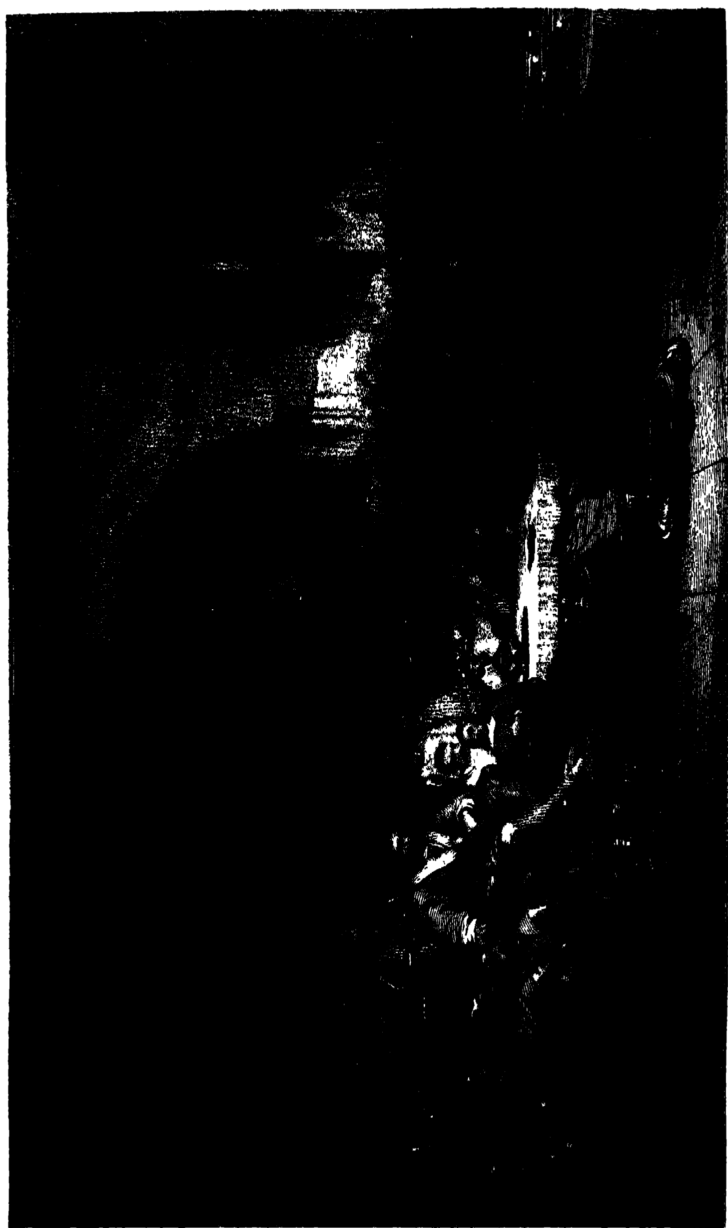
And then the subject changed,—I looked upon him disarrayed of his princely robes, with the loss of his dignity and

* In his recent ascents from different points, the writer had the pleasure of meeting on the summit of Snowdon several enlightened foreigners. Two German travellers and a young Frenchman were among the parties; with strangers from Scotland, Ireland, and various other quarters. All seemed to feel the peculiar kind of interest to which the Author alludes, and he acknowledges the pleasure he received from their society.

sway, and Snowdon arose only in his deserted majesty, "the crownless monarch of the scene!" Another shifting picture followed, and brought to light the beauty and magnificence which surrounded this regal mountain in the chivalrous day of the feudal Conqueror, with all the attributes of that peculiar grandeur which appeared in those Norman castles lying around, the very ruins of which rivet and appal the eye. The visionary pictures of the night all passed away, one after another, like the airy procession in the glass of Banquo, and left me in a state of delightful repose till the bright morning gleamed in at my window, and the harper's telyn, recalling Owain's sweet strain to "the Rising Sun," awoke me to renewed consciousness.

When Archbishop Baldwin made his itinerary through Wales, he found a minstrel in every ancient hall, and a harp was always preserved in the houses of all persons of respectability; but in the present time it is almost unknown in South Wales, while at most of the inns in the northern part of the country, travellers have their hours of leisure enlivened by the national tunes of this land of music and song.* The old harper whom I had previously seen at Beddgelert was either superannuated or dead since my last visit, and the present minstrel is only a scion of the ancient bard, but with a vigour of touch, and delicacy of taste that bids fair to make him a successful competitor at the next Esteiddfod. At the time I heard him he played many beautiful airs in the happiest style of execution. But it is the association with the surrounding sublime scenery that gives to the national minstrelsy of the Principality its peculiar charm; and the

* By the laws of Wales, a harp was one of the three things necessary to constitute a gentleman, that is, a freeman; and no person could pretend to that title, unless he had one of these favourite instruments, and could play upon it.—*Busby's Music and Musicians.*



music of a Welsh harper in the romantic land of his forefathers, not only awakens and entertains the sense of pleasurable feeling that waits upon the notes of melody, but it is the voice that conjures up facts and scenes in historical unison with the natural wonders around. It inspires emotions of exquisite delight, deeply imbued with lofty and tender sentiments, such as do not belong to the practised harmonies of the best performances at courts and concerts.

At the distance of about one mile and a half from Beddgelert stands the magnificent pass between the mountains of Carnarvon and Merioneth, including Pont Aberglaslyn,—which exhibits, perhaps, the most remarkable example of romantic scenery belonging to the northern part of Wales. On my way to the bridge my attention was directed to the stone mentioned by Pennant, and known as the seat of the bard of whom I have before spoken,—the poet and patriot Rhys Gôch, contemporary with Owen Glyndwr. It is part of a wanderer's creed to put faith in traditions of this kind; and I could easily picture to myself the gifted descendant of the house of Hafod pursuing his accustomed solitary walk towards this his beloved retreat, where, seated under the roof of heaven, surrounded by the stern majesty of Nature in her darkest, loneliest, or loveliest moods, he poured forth those bold, pathetic hymns which nerved his countrymen to deeds of honour and renown.

The approach to Pont Aberglaslyn supplies all the materials of a most marvellous picture, rising, in some points of view, to the sublime and terrible. The road where the view first bursts upon the eye in all its varied and extraordinary features, by its bleak, barren aspect, overhung by huge precipices and broken rocks stretching far into the distance, well prepares the mind for those impressions which, on whatever side approached, by day or by moonlight, as Bingley so enthusiastically describes it, never fails to call forth the admir-

ation of the coldest traveller. All the milder features of landscape are here lost amidst these rocky fabrics; instead of the softer interchange of hill, and lake, and glen, the grandeur of the whole scene at once arrests and employs the imagination. The way through the pass, which, so late as Mr. Pennant's visit, was a mere horsepath, was a few years ago sufficiently widened for a double line of carriages, and has more recently been much improved. It runs along the base of the mountain, which has been blasted to a considerable extent, and is formed upon the solid granite, bounded on the river side by a stone wall. The bridge is built from rock to rock, and produces an extraordinary effect in the scene, of which the engraving on the opposite page conveys a faithful representation. There was formerly a salmon leap at this place, which has been destroyed; but the river still abounds with that fish, and tribes of speckled trout, which afford excellent sport to the experienced angler.

There is an old story relating to this spot, which, if true, (and who will dare to doubt it?) shews that the shrewdness of a Welshman was more than a match for the crafty Prince of Darkness. Pont Aberglaslyn, or the bridge at the conflux of the Blue Pool, is sometimes rendered the Devil's Bridge, from the following circumstance:—The Evil One once proposed to the neighbouring inhabitants to build them a bridge across the pass on this condition, that he should take possession of the first who went over it for his trouble. The bargain was struck, and the bridge soon appeared in its place. The people insisted on a literal fulfilment of the contract, and, dragging a dog to the spot, whipped him over the bridge, in satisfaction of his Infernal Majesty's claim.

From the place whence I contemplated the chasm, ascended those mighty cliffs, that rear themselves eight hundred feet in height, with huge grotesque rocks—here bright, there flinging their shadows deep as night upon the black waters,

which, plunging downwards in separate streams, mingle at last in one broad translucent torrent. The eye almost recoiled from the beetling precipice, which seemed to threaten destruction to the narrow ridge upon which I was then standing close to the brink of the flood. Not a feature of nature was wanting to complete the deep-wrought charm of the hour and the spot. The gathering twilight giving broader masses to the rude rocks, soaring in succession above bolder cliffs, here piled tier upon tier, and again broken by the huge serpentine chasm,—with the wild scene,—the sounding cataract,—the bright river,—and the dark green glen stretched far below,—recalled to mind some of the boldest Alpine scenery that ever inspired the genius of the painter, or the gloomy joy of the robber chief. On the hill towards Moel Hebog is a copper mine; and about the turnpike gate and bridge, the traveller is generally beset by a tribe of little crystal sellers, who, followed by the bare-footed representatives of the spinning and knitting interests, make an incessant clamour of "buy, buy, buy."* The road over the bridge leads direct to Tan y Bwlch over the mountains, and that running parallel with the stream to Tan y Bwlch through Tremadoc.

Among other tourists, Mr. Wyndham justly extols the picturesque grandeur of the scenery around this unrivalled pass. Unfolding some new features at every step, the succession of strata assumes all shapes and colours, from the lightest grey to the darkest hues of brown and black, and often, when the sun emerges from behind his canopy of clouds, the variegated

* At Beddgelert, as in many other parts of Wales, the children of the poor constantly beset strangers, offering to them crystals and specimens of spar, which the mines afford in great abundance; and it is seldom that an English word can be got from them beyond "Yes," or "No," or "*Coppar, Coppar;*" which latter word they use as they offer a specimen, and it might be supposed that it was copper ore they wished to part with; but they mean copper coin is what they want.—*Smith's Snowdonia.*

summits are enriched with the most brilliant tints of light and gold.

But to return to Beddgelert.—No tourist who has a day unemployed should leave unvisited the almost unknown lakes and valley of Nantlle, lying nearly as secluded as the back settlements of America, and enclosing a population of not less than two thousand persons, who obtain a subsistence in the slate quarries of the neighbourhood.

The way to this romantic place is along the Carnarvon road for four miles, turning to the left at the turnpike gate by Pont Rhyddu, just half a mile beyond Llyn y Gader. There is no mistaking the path, which runs by the farm of Drws y Coed, and near the celebrated lake, Llyn y Dywarchen, noticed by Giraldus,* in his tour through Wales in the twelfth century, for containing a floating island. Ranges of precipices, deeply channelled by the mountain storm, rear themselves in all directions. On the right rises the high and precipitous Mynydd Mawr, wild and rugged in aspect, projecting its semilunar horns, and enclosing at its opposite base the lake of Llyn Cwellyn, whose clear waters in a peculiar manner reflect the pictured heavens, and register every passing cloud that skims its surface. The defile is marked by dreary wildness, without a single tree to soften the severe solitude of the place. But when I had attained the head of the pass, the scene which presented itself was one of almost incomparable grandeur. The field of vision was the whole range of the vale, clasped on each side by files of rocks, but spreading out at the distant extremity over the descending land to Carnarvon bay. Swelling ridges of green plantations

* This humorous churchman asserted of Merionethshire, that it was "the roughest and most dreary part of Wales, for its mountains were both high and perpendicular, and in many places so grouped together, that shepherds talking or quarrelling on their tops, would scarcely in a whole day's journey come together."



bordered, and in many parts broke, the uniformity of the vale, and picture trees shaded the homesteads, and dotted the woodland scene. In the hollow lay two beautiful pools divided by a narrow isthmus, fed by the mountain stream that flows westward, which again urges its slender current through the farther end to carry its shining tribute to the sea. It was mid-day when I was on the spot, and the sun was shedding his golden rays on all surrounding objects, brightening up the sharp points of the mountains, throwing into bold relief their pinnacled summits, and flashing his broad beams upon the lakes and throughout all the vale. A continuous descent along a road of recent formation, and kept in travelling order, brought me into the midst of the busy population that throng this place like a beehive.

I turned off from the road to the distance of about one hundred yards to examine the immense slate quarries of Nantlle, and to witness the process of blasting the rocks. The face of the chasm was quite perpendicular, and cut into stages of different heights, and the workmen were ascending and descending with incredible activity by means of ropes, fastened to strong iron bolts at the head of the rock. A party was at work upon one of these ledges about thirty feet from the ground, drilling a hole to receive gunpowder. All being now in readiness, the train was fired, and immense masses of slate were instantly dislodged, and precipitated to the lower stage,—the noise of the explosion echoing on all sides, and reverberating for a considerable time amongst the mountains and hollows. The depth of the quarry was probably about two hundred feet, and at the bottom a drift was at that time being formed to relieve the upper part from the water, that by this means is directed into a well, from which it is pumped by a steam engine.

The next process which I observed, was that of splitting the blocks of slate into their proper thicknesses, which was

accomplished with astonishing ease and rapidity, the workmen dividing them into flat slabs for household and mortuary purposes, or into thin plates for architectural operations. The surrounding scene was full of activity and interest—water wheels, pumping engines, inclined planes, railways, steam engines, bridges and aqueducts meeting the eye at all points. Near this place Wilson made his celebrated view of Snowdon, which from this point is seen through the long vista of the pass rising with extraordinary grandeur, having the bare ridges of Crib y Ddysgyl and Y Wyddfa on the right and left. I now retraced my steps to Beddgelert, along the high ground by Llyn y Gader,—where it is said Edward, the ruthless conqueror of Wales, charmed by the beauty of the place, used to linger day after day,—and from thence by a walk of continued descent, reached the comfortable *hospitium* of mine host of the Goat.* It ought not to be omitted, that in this parish was born Mr. Pritchard, the author of *The Welshman's Candle*, a work intended to bring before his countrymen in an attractive form the facts and doctrines of the Holy Scriptures; and whoever reads it will readily comprehend how the simplicity, strength, and earnestness of the style should have made it popular in Wales. The reason for its composition he thus quaintly gives:—

"Because they take in sermons no delight,
But idle songs with eagerness recite,
I, for their good, have thus employed my time,
And put the doctrines that ensue in rhyme.
And this my book *The Welshman's Candle* nam'd,
Because therein I've most sincerely aim'd
Each ignorant and darkling mind to light,
And taught him how to serve his God aright."

* Subsequently I visited Nantlle from Carnarvon. The route is along the Pwllheli road, from which boundless views of the ocean are obtained, through Llanwnda as far as Tal y Sarn, where a sudden turn is made to the left, which shortly brings the tourist into the district of Nantlle.

There are many smaller pieces in the book, illustrative of christian practice, amongst which is one on the "duty of clergymen," that it would be well if all in holy orders, both in England and Wales, would literally "learn by heart."

Midway between Beddgelert and Carnarvon, close by the side of the high road, about half a mile beyond Bettws Garmon, stands Nant Mill, which from its picturesque position, in conjunction with its miniature cascade and bridge, is, as Mr. Gilpin would say, one of the "sweetest" vignettes that could detain the admiring eye of a painter. A narrow road to the left leads over a rustic bridge of one arch, which is thrown across the river, and abuts on the sides of the rock formed by the channel through which the current rushes. The mill stream is conveyed through a fissure of the rock and along a wooden trough to the overshot wheel, from whence it falls and mingles with the waters below.

Before bidding adieu to Beddgelert, I will mention for the information of the valetudinarian or stranger, who wishes to while away from a quarter to half an hour at this favourite resort of tourists, that he cannot employ his time more agreeably than by a stroll to the cascades on the Colwyn, which are only a few hundred yards from the Goat Hotel to the left of the bridge. A gate, about a hundred yards beyond the bridge, opens upon a path which leads across a pleasant meadow to the falls. This playful picture of the gambolling waters is well worthy of inspection, being overhung on all sides with trees and shrubs growing from the interstices of the rocks; and after heavy rains the sweeping river presents a beautiful, and even magnificent scene.

Proceeding towards Tremadoc, along the skirt of high cliffs, a view soon presented itself of the little and great Traeths stretching to the sea, and the bold embankment, which bears witness to the genius and courage—worthy the present enlightened age— of its enterprising founder. Thousands of

acres have been reclaimed from the waters, and a safe communication formed between the counties of Carnarvon and Merioneth across the estuary of Traeth Mawr, formerly the grave of so many unfortunate wayfarers. The clear blue waters that rolled inland like an arm of the sea, girt by vast rocks and precipices on the left, and by the triple summit of mighty Moëlwyn on the right, have disappeared, leaving an immense tract of broad lands, presenting their rich tribute to the seasons as they successively return. This extraordinary barrier of stone-work was pushed from the opposite sides of the two counties at the same time and united in the centre of the channel. In the vicinity rise the mansions of Tan yr Allt and Morva Lodge, the work also of the same spirited gentleman. The former has some architectural taste, and, being elevated on a lofty rock overlooking the town, surrounded by flourishing plantations, presents a picturesque appearance.

This formidable work, which has so greatly improved this district, was accomplished by the late W. A. Madocks, Esq. In 1800 he recovered nearly two thousand acres from the sea; and a few years afterwards constructed the large embankment over the Traeth Mawr. About seven thousand acres more were subsequently secured from the encroachment of the tides, five thousand of which are now cultivated. The embankment is nearly a mile in length, and about one hundred feet high, the breadth at top thirty feet, and varying from one to three hundred feet at the foundation; the railway from Ffestiniog runs along the sea side of it, several feet above the level of the carriage road, and affords protection to carriages and equestrians in boisterous weather. In 1821, Mr. Madocks was instrumental in procuring an act of Parliament for improving the bay, in which vessels of two or three hundred tons burden now ride in safety. Port Madoc is one mile from the town, whence great quantities of slates, copper

ore, and other valuable materials are shipped. Tre-Madoc lies between Beddgelert and Pwllheli, and possesses a tolerable inn. The town is of modern origin, having been built by Mr. Madocks, whose name it bears, with the Welsh word *tre* (a town or village) prefixed to it.

The village of Penmorfa is not more than four miles apart from Tremadoc, and the traveller would be induced to walk that distance, were it only to connect with his visit the recollection of the singular story of the Lord of Clennency, whose name stands recorded on a mural tablet in its little church. Sir John Owen, like the chivalrous Knight of the Blue Stocking at Denbigh, held out fast and firm to the Royal cause in the civil wars of Charles the First. He was, however, overpowered and taken prisoner. After the execution of the king an order was issued to bring him, with the Duke of Hamilton, the Earl of Holland, and the Lords Goring and Capel, to trial. The bold knight said in his defence,—that "He was a plain gentleman of Wales, who had been always taught to obey the king,—that he had served him honestly during the war, and finding many honest men endeavoured to raise forces whereby they might get him out of prison, he did the like." The sentence was, that he should be beheaded, which hearing, he bowed to the court, and with the most perfect good humour, returned the judges thanks for their lenity. On being questioned about this extraordinary conduct, he replied in a firm and audible voice, "It was a great honour to a poor gentleman of Wales to lose his head with such noble lords; for by G— he was afraid they would have hanged him." He was not however beheaded; for by the zealous interference of Colonels Hutchinson and Ireton he was only imprisoned, and in a short time afterwards obtained his liberty.

That part of the county of Carnarvon which projects into the sea in a south-westerly direction, is called the PROMONTORY OF LLYN, and separates the bays of Carnarvon and Cardigan.

This tongue of land contains many interesting remains of antiquity, which prove its intimate connection with the earliest British history, though the traditional records have faded away. These monuments neither time, nor the change in the condition of its inhabitants, has been able entirely to destroy; but they exist like the occasional cyphers in some old moth-eaten manuscript, which may, indeed, serve to determine its era with tolerable accuracy, while they mock the antiquary's eye in relation to its import. It is, however, seldom visited by the mere pleasure-taking tourist; for it possesses but few of those attractions in its roads, inns, and beauty-spots of earth, which usually allure him forward from place to place.

Formerly the Promontory of Llyn was distinguished by military arrangements of great skill, which bear testimony to the science of the ancient Britons in the art of fortification, and melancholy evidence, alas! to the civil conflicts which distracted this country even before the period of the Saxon and Roman invasions. The strong circular fort of Dinas Dinlle, about six miles from Carnarvon, was the centre of two diagonal lines of posts, stretching north and south of that fortress, having Dinorddwig "standing on tiptoe above all the rest." The stranger will discover what remains of it on the summit of a green artificial mount, rising on the verge of a marsh, so immediately on the coast that the sea, at high tides, has washed its water-side into an abrupt cliff.

Glynllifon Park, the seat of Lord Newborough, lies on the left of the road, and occupies the site of the strong hold of Cilmin Froed-du, or Cilmin with the black foot, one of the ancestors of the fifteen Royal tribes of North Wales. In the distance are seen the gigantic heights of the Rivel Mountains, rearing their forked cones in the face of the sun, casting back his hot beams, and rising in bold relief like the savage lords of this ancient land. Close at hand the

bright stream of the Llyfni crosses the road, and farther on rests the hamlet of Clynog, discovering its humble cottages amongst the thick rich foliage of the surrounding trees, with the open sea dashing wildly on the right of the picture, and possessing an elegant gothic church of beautiful architecture, and of nobler dimensions than usually belong to the villages of Wales.

Clynog Church is connected with national history, and contains several monuments; amongst which is the altar-tomb of George Twisleton, Esq., a colonel in the Parliamentary army, who defeated and captured the loyal Sir John Owen, of whom mention has already been made. It has, also, a vaulted passage leading to what remains of the monastery and the chapel of St. Beuno, the uncle of the sainted virgin of Winifred's Well, whose mutilated and headless effigy may still be seen in the belfry of that sacred edifice which witnessed his wonder-working powers, even after he was dead. If the traveller choose, he may see the iron-belted chest of the saint, and if he be piously disposed, he may drop his votive offering through its convenient aperture in the lid, as did the pilgrims of yore; and furthermore, if he be not better taught, he may adopt the prescribed form of those sinners of other days:—"Here I offer to God four-pence for my private sins, on which account the Almighty is now punishing me; to be given for the same service that the blessed saints used to offer, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." In the neighbourhood of the village, towards the sea, is an ancient cromlech, and amongst the mountains the waterfall of Dibbin Mawr.

The road from Clynog towards the Rivel rocks, passes along the western base of Gyrn Goch, the Red Point, leading to the hamlet of Llanaelhauarn, whose elevated white-washed church becomes the beacon of the distant mariner. The path over the Rivels towards Nevin leaves the high road at this village, and crosses the mountains about the centre of the chain.

Nevin,—the secluded town of Nevin, shadowed by the everlasting hills, and washed by the ocean, whose ceaseless tides are said to resemble eternity,—is the place of all others that a traveller should visit, who possesses the faculty of re-peopling, by his imagination, the solitary waste with the spectacles of days long gone by. It was in the neighbouring plains of this place that Edward, after the conquest of Wales at the latter end of the thirteenth century, summoned his own barons, and the gallants of Europe, to join in the divertisement of the Round Table. The revelry was commenced on the heights of Snowdon. From this theatre of rocks the knightly train descended in long array to the levels about Nevin. Standing on this spot, the wanderer will not fail to recal old Chaucer's description of the same pageant at the court of Duke Theseus, which, though running rudely along the lines, forms a graphic picture of the lively scene which on that day presented itself.

"There mayst thou see devising of harness
So uncouth and so rich, and wrought so wele
Of goldsmithry, of brouding and of steel,
The shieldés brighté, testeres, and trappúres,
Gold-hewen helmés, hauberks, coat-armures:
Lordés in paréments on their coursérs,
Knightés of retinue, and eke squiérs,
Nailing the spears, and helmés buckléing,
Guiding of shields, with lainers lacing."

The plains were crowded with the nobility of the country, and foreigners of distinction from all parts of Christendom, besides a host of spectators. The lists were arranged in the most magnificent style, and the galleries blazed with the jewelled velvets and gold embroidered dresses of the fair dames of England. The cavaliers waved their pennons in the air in the form of a cross, a fashion adopted by the crusaders, to display at once their gallantry and religious devotion. The judges took their stations; "La Royne de la Beaulté et des amours," as the old chroniclers write it, sat

blushing on her throne, having the chaplet in her fair hand, with which she was to grace the brows of her champion. The heralds made their proclamation with sound of trumpets,

"And cried was loud,
Do now your devoir, youngé knightés proud.
There is no more to say; but east and west
In gone the spearés sadly in the rest;
In go'th the sharpé spur into the side·
There see men who can joust and who can ride
There shiveren shaftés upon shieldés thick;
He feeleth through the hearté-spoon the prick
Up springen spearés twenty foot on height;
Out gone the swordés as the silver bright·
The helmés they to-hewen and to-shred;
Out burst the blood with sterné streamés red"

The traveller will probably awake from this splendid day-dream of his imagination, when he arrives at the fact mentioned in the last line of the old poet's story, and as the vision vanishes from his mental eye he will recal the deeds of blood and cruelty that stained these "youngé knightés proud," who had sworn, according to the rules of their order, "to susteyne the fayth of God," and the truth of their lady-love, by their swords. He will remember, also, the churchman's orthodox injunction, which forms an excellent commentary upon the principle and temper which characterised this offspring of the feudal ages,—"That a knight should render no other reason to an infidel than six inches of his falchion thrust into his accursed bowels."

About a mile from Nevin is Porthdinllyn—the Harbour of Llyn—almost hidden from the world by a semicircular range of hills, and open only to the fine sandy sea-washed bay. A rivalry was set up by the good people of this neighbourhood, between this place and Holyhead, as a packet station for Ireland, but the latter possesses important natural advantages that do not belong to Porthdinllyn.*

* See page 154 of this volume.

Bardsey Isle, or Ynis Enlli, according to its British appellation, is about three miles from land. A rapid current, that has not inaptly received the title of Bardsey race, sets in between the island and the point called Braich y Pwll the ancient Canganum Promontorium of the Roman geographer. The beetling rocks that rear their bare stony heads opposite to, and in some parts overhanging, the channel, would appear almost to forbid all approach to this sanctuary, at least so it would seem to the stranger standing on the verge of the promontory; but the fisherman at the creek carries his vessel a point or two outwards, and then warily creeps into the little inlet on the south-east of the island. The rocks of which I speak form a part of the great mountainous ridge that occupies nearly one half of the place, presenting a rugged barrier to the north, and gently sweeping into the more level lands of the south, which bear the corn fruits of the season, with here and there a patch of green meadow. This "asylum of the saints," as the bards used to call it, was in the first ages of Welsh history, the resort of pilgrims from all quarters, and here it was that St. Dubricius, in the early part of the sixth century, led his clergy after the synod of Brevi, in which he distinguished himself by boldly confuting the Pelagian heresy. Scarcely a trace of the ancient monastery that existed in the time of Dubricius can now be discovered,—that sacred edifice to whose holy inhabitants a special covenant was entered into by the Almighty, according to monkish legends, bestowing upon them the peculiar privilege of dying by seniority, and thus affording to each a timely warning of his approaching departure. Full twenty thousand of these holy men and devout pilgrims are said, by the historian of that time, to have consecrated the earth of Bardsey Isle by their remains; of which the gibing Fuller, who never loses an opportunity of slipping his wit, says, "it would be more facile to find graves in Bardsey for so many saints, than saints for so many graves."

Another scene, and one of joyous festivity, presented itself in the island about the year 1796, when Lord Newborough, the proprietor of the place, assembled the gentry the neighbourhood to the fète champêtre on this sea-girt solitude. The lonely fishermen and cragsmen were not left unheeded on this day of enjoyment, nor cudgelled away by the heralds and men-at-arms, as were the vassals of a barbarous age; but collected in happy groups, with their wives, and the merry maidens of the isle, while the noble Lord, and Lady Newborough, the Queen of Beauty for the day, distributed amongst them hats and bonnets, streaming with the ribboned-colours of the rainbow. Not far from Bardsey may be seen a land-locked semicircular bay, protruding its rock-jaws far into the sea, which seamen regard with terror, and which has received the ill-omened name of Hell's Mouth.

Pwllheli, the chief port of this part of the bay of Cardigan, commands from its range of sand hills, and from the blunt rock of Careg yr Imbill, about a mile from the place, the most magnificent views of ocean scenery, and brings within the sweep of the vision the distant towering mountains of Merioneth and Carnarvon. A *gourmand* would probably go out of his way to visit this place, were it only to taste the John Doree which is frequently taken in the bays and creeks of the coast; a fish which the simple inhabitants used formerly to cast again to its native element, from its forbidding ugliness, but with the flavour of which the celebrated Quin was so delighted, that he used to wish his palate was as long as from Bristol to London, that he might enjoy its exquisite relish all the way.

The road to Criccieth is coast-wise, and the distance from Pwllheli is little more than ten miles. Though the country round about is sterile and uninviting, the wailing breeze that sweeps across the sea inspires a melancholy pleasure, and speaks like the voice in Goethe's Song of Spirits over the waters:—

"Wind is the water's amorous wooer;
Wind from the depths upheaves the wild waves.
Soul of a mortal, how like thou to water!
Fate of a mortal, how like to the wind!"

Criccieth has its castle of high antiquity and British origin, now in ruins, which once stood proudly on a narrow neck of land that juts into the sea. It has also its legend and history, and commands besides an open view across the bay, which embraces the yet imposing remains of Harlech, backed by the lofty mountains and heavy ridges of Merioneth. Sir Howel y Fwyall, who had the government of this fortress, bestowed upon him by the Black Prince, and the battle-axe with which he performed prodigies of valour at the Battle of Poictiers, cutting off the head of the French King's horse and capturing the monarch, belong to its history. This wonderful axe had a daily commemoration of its important services assigned to it at the expense of the crown, after this fashion:—A mess of meat was brought up with all due ceremony, and placed before the unconscious weapon. The dish then made the *detour* of the knight's dining table, and was set smoking before him, and afterwards it was taken to replenish the stomachs of the poor. This ceremony was continued till the time of Elizabeth, for the benefit of the soul of Sir Howel y Fwyall. Little remains of this curious fortress except the two round towers that flanked its entrance; though the double foss and vallum, and the lines of its court yards, may yet be traced with tolerable accuracy.

The usual route of tourists proceeding from Tremadoc into Merionethshire, is to take the road along the northern side of Traeth Bach to Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, and Ffestiniog, before visiting Harlech—and this, indeed, is the most convenient plan; but a fisherman having hoisted the sail of his little craft, while I was standing on the beach near Criccieth, I jumped into it, and made a pleasant voyage through part of Cardigan Bay to Harlech, leaving the vale of Ffestiniog for another excursion.



CHAPTER XV.

HARLECH—TAN Y BWLCH—MAENTWROG—FFESTINIOG.

There is something in the scent and impression of a balmy atmosphere, in the lustre of sunshine, in the azure heaven and purple clouds, in the opening of prospects on this side and on that, in the contemplation of verdure and fertility, and industry and simplicity, and cheerfulness, in all their variations, in the very art and exercise of travelling, peculiarly congenial to the human frame.—*Godwin's St. Leon.*

Harlech would appear to the visiter at the present day a mean little village, only remarkable for its feudal castle; but it was formerly a town of considerable importance, and a fortified post of the Romans and the Britons, defending the openings of the two Traeths, and securing a communication with the opposite shore. This place was much to my taste: it had musty records and old legends pertaining to its fortress, and wild haunts in its neighbourhood, so I entered the open door of the Blue Lion, a small but clean and comfortable inn, with plenty of savory *edibles* wherewith to refresh the hungry traveller.

Harlech Castle stands on a rocky eminence, close by the marshy tract between the hills and Cardigan Bay, bearing, when viewed from the low ground, a considerable resemblance to the Turkish castle of Belgrade. The name of the old

fortress was Twr Bronwen, from Bronwen, or the fair-necked sister to Bren ap Llyr, Duke of Cornwall, and subsequently King of Britain. This lady lived in the third century, and was the wife of Matholwch, an Irishman. Though fair to look upon, she does not seem to have been of very "gentle blood;" for her husband having unfortunately struck her a blow upon the face, she roused all the country into a civil war to revenge the insult. This unlucky blow is called in the ancient triads, one of the three evil blows of Britain, two other outrages of a similar kind having produced the like commotions. This lady is believed to have dwelt in the old fortress, from the highest turret in the castle being called Bronwen's tower. In the eleventh century it was termed Caer Collwyn, from Collwyn ap Tango, Lord of Ardudwy, who resided in a square tower of the ancient edifice, parts of which, now the foundation of the more modern work, may yet be distinguished. The present castle—one of the most entire in Wales—bears evidence of having been erected by the architect who was employed by Edward the First in his other magnificent and gigantic structures, and consists of one large square building, each side measuring above seventy yards, having a round tower at the several corners, crowned with turrets, now nearly defaced. How fearful must it have appeared in its pride of strength, with its numerous fortifications and fosses, based on the verge of a perpendicular rock which rendered it almost invulnerable! The walls, which are partly covered with ivy, are lofty and of great thickness, towering above the marsh and the sea; and from the summit is beheld a splendid prospect over the bay,—the Promontory of Llyn,—Criccieth Castle,—the shagged sides of Carreg y Saeth,—and the range of Snowdon hills, soaring far above the other mountains—now bright, now half shrouded in their veil of clouds.

If we may credit tradition, the ancient fortress, on the

foundations of which Harlech Castle stands, was built by Maelgwyn Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales, about 350. The modern structure was completed in 1283; in 1404, it was seized, with that of Cardigan, by the fiery Glyndwr; and in the Wars of the Roses it afforded a retreat to the high spirited Margaret of Anjou. after escaping the grasp of the intriguing Lord Stanley, and the fatal overthrow at Northampton. Strange and bitter, indeed, must have been her feelings, when she entered this gloomy fortress, driven from the gay capital of her husband's empire, and seeking a hasty refuge from the storm which beat upon her fortunes within its frowning gates. No longer a jewelled queen, the proudest among the high-born dames of England, but "a hunted deer, hit by th' archers," fleeing from the fury of her enemies, —disguised, deserted, and almost heart-broken. There is something magnificent in the pride of Margaret, and her untameable courage in the midst of the most dismal disasters, and to the last of her life, which has left her a name that belongs to no other British queen. From Harlech Margaret proceeded to Scotland, raised a new army, and waved her banner of victory upon the plains of Wakefield. When the tide of success set in favour of Edward IV., the only strong holds which held out against the victor, were a few castles in Northumberland and that of Harlech. The last was held for the Lancasterian party by David ap Jevan, equally distinguished by his stature and by his valour. Spite of threats and sieges, he remained governor nine years after the coronation of Edward. At length the king sent an army against him, commanded by the Earl of Pembroke. After marching with incredible difficulty and hardship through the rough defiles of the British Alps, surmounting terrific crags, and passing along steep precipices, the English at length succeeded in surrounding the fortress. Pembroke committed the siege to his brother, a hero at least equal in size, if not in military prowess, to the

British commander. In reply to the summons for surrender, the fiery Cambrian made answer, that once in France "he held a tower till all the old women in Wales heard of it, and that the old women of France should now hear how he had defended a Welsh castle."*

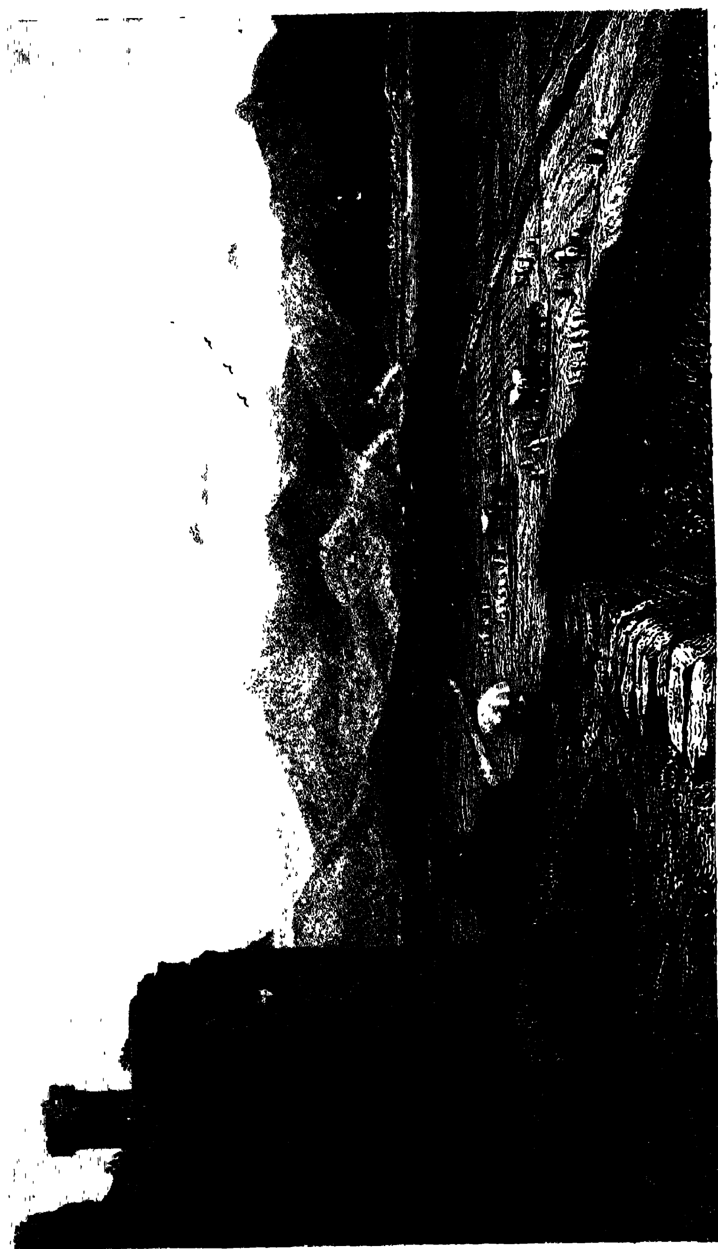
Sir Richard, finding all other means fruitless, had at length recourse to famine. This is always a powerful mediator; and the knight having promised both life and liberty to the besieged, on these terms the place was surrendered. On the news being conveyed to King Edward, he angrily refused to fulfil the conditions, having determined within himself on putting the obstinate old commander to some cruel death. "Then, Sire," replied the gallant Sir Richard, "you may wreak your vengeance upon me; here is my life in place of the Welsh captain's; and if you do not comply, I will instantly put David again in possession of his castle, and your Highness may send whom you please to take him out."

In the civil wars between Charles and his Parliament, this was the last fortress that maintained the Royal cause. It surrendered to General Mytton, in March, 1647, on honourable terms, when Mr. William Owen was its governor, and the garrison consisted only of twenty-eight men.

Pennant gives an account of a golden torques found in a garden near this place, in 1692; but whether it is a Roman, Gallic, or British relic, appears somewhat doubtful.† Its use appears to have been that of a baldrick, to suspend the quiver of the chieftains or men of rank, so as to hang in a graceful manner by means of the hook, while the golden wreath, passing over one shoulder, crossed the breast diagonally. According to Pliny, it was bestowed among the Romans as a

* History of the Gwyder Family.

† Virgil, when speaking of the exercises of the Trojan youths, has made an allusion to this mode of wearing the Roman quivers.



military reward for great exploits; and the etiquette, I believe, was to award to citizens torques formed of silver, and to the auxiliaries the same composed of gold.

From the castle may be seen, at the ebb of spring tides, distant about six miles in a southerly direction, the dangerous bank of sand and gravel of Sarn Badrig, or, as it is sometimes spelt, Padrig, the Giant's Causeway, which lies in the shape of an uncoiled serpent at the bottom of the bay, running twenty miles from the coast. If tradition is to be credited, all this part of the sea was formerly an inhabited district, called Cantref Gwaelod, a rich pastoral region, which was overwhelmed by the ocean about the year 500.*

The district about Harlech is extremely interesting, from the number of British remains—cromlechs, carnedds, pillar stones, and circles within which the Gorseddau, or bardic meetings were formerly held—by which it is surrounded. About four miles south-easterly, is the romantic glen of Cwm Bychan, and the desolate passes of Bwlch Tyddiad and Drws Ardudwy, combining scenes of nature in her wildest and most beautifully luxuriant attire. Near the pool of Cwm Bychan rises the black and gigantic rock called Carreg y Saeth, and the stream which runs from the northward issues from the high land by Llyn-eiddew Mawr on the range of Y Graig-ddrwg.

The prime of the morning affords to the foot traveller in Wales an opportunity of witnessing, at his leisure, the wonderful enchantments produced by the vapoury clouds that hang at that time about the woods and mountains; and then afterwards to follow the revelations of earth's real beauties,

* "About the year 500, when Gwyddno Garan Hir was lord of this hundred, one of the men who had the care of the dams got drunk, and left open a flood-gate. The sea broke through with such force, as also to tear down part of the wall, and overflow the whole hundred, which, since that time, has been always completely flooded."

under the increasing influence of the beaming light. It was at early day, therefore, that I set out from Harlech on my way to Tan y Bwlch, having the shining waters of the bay on my left, and a fabric of massy rocks on the right. The road after the first three miles runs along the shore of the Traeth Bach, and within a mile of the upper and lower pools of Llandecwyn. Crossing a low mountainous ridge, the village and vale of Maentwrog discover themselves at a comparatively short distance. I turned off to the right, however, before reaching this peaceful hamlet, for the purpose of visiting the waterfall of Rhaiadr Du, the Black Cataract, formed by the interesting little river Velin Rhyd. The water throws itself over three black smooth rocks, placed in such opposing directions that the whole of the stream is not seen from the bottom, and then rushes impetuously through separate channels overhung with masses of rock and foliage, that, in some parts, almost exclude the light of day. After contemplating this extraordinary scene for some time, I turned away, and regained the road leading to the village, and, passing through it, I shortly arrived at the Oakley Arms, at Tan y Bwlch.

The Oakley Arms is situated at a picturesque angle of the road, and commands an extensive view along the vale, with the river Dwyryd flowing along in tortuous windings, here and there visible through trees, which are ranged in beautiful order, or massed together throughout the vale, imparting to it a harmonious and park-like effect. The hotel has rather a singular appearance; it consists of three ranges of building with octangular ends, connected together by small porches, which form entrances to the house and offices. I was particularly struck with some large blocks of stone with which the porches are paved, one of which, I was told, contained ninety square feet, and I observed a remarkable block forming the brest-summer of the coach house, which is nearly thirty feet long.

The following morning was delightfully fine and the air invigorating. After breakfast—accompanied by a pedestrian from the Emerald Isle, who, though a previous stranger to me, I found a most agreeable and intelligent companion,—I entered the grounds of the neighbouring mansion, eager to behold the truly romantic scenery around. Few things can surpass the pleasure of a morning ramble through the woods which clothe the heights above the hall, or the splendour of the prospect from the terrace over the vale, which combines in itself every beautiful and sublime feature of a British landscape.

The entrance to Plas Tan y Bwlch is through a fine avenue of trees, the road winding round the slope of the hill and over a lofty bridge, under which rolls in foaming torrents a mountain stream which is overhung with rich foliage. The house is situated on an eminence commanding fine views of the vale beneath, and the surrounding mountains. Turning through a small gate we entered upon an oblong terrace, raised above the gardens to a level with the mansion, one side of it being supported by massive buttresses; and having at the western end a flight of steps leading to the shrubberies.

In my walk through the grounds, which are, by the politeness of the owner, accessible to visiters, I observed some magnificent specimens of the rhododendron, of nearly thirty years' growth, and the laurels surpassed any I had ever before seen; numerous other plants and trees appeared to grow with equal luxuriance; both gardens and plantations were tastefully laid out, and well adapted to the continual inequalities in the surface and the aspect. It was here I first remarked the singular appearance of two fine young trees, an elm and an ash, which, having sprung up side by side, intertwined their stems almost from the root in so strict an embrace as to present the sylvan phenomenon of a single tree.

I had already beheld the valley so much extolled by Lord

Lyttleton—and, indeed, by every one who has described it—from different points, and under every variety of aspect. The approach to it from the gloomy wilderness of the pass of Aberglaslyn, is full of beauty, rendered more novel and pleasing from its singular contrasts. I had looked upon its glittering stream, when at the full, from the bold eminence, below which it lies embosomed, whence the white sail could scarcely be discovered, and the fishermen on its banks became but mere specks. I had beheld it more nearly in its lovely features, from the pleasant inn at Tan y Bwlch—from the bridge at Maentwrog, and the bold acclivities above—along the banks of the meandering river, and, not the least, from the elevated and salubriously situated hamlet of Ffestiniog, from which the vale, though rather improperly, takes its name. But under no view had it presented itself, as a whole, in so charming a combination of objects, and in all its softer and most attractive features, as when I then beheld it about a mile below Maentwrog, on an eminence above the road to Harlech; its rock-strewn, sedgy banks, the lake-like waters of the Traeth, its wooded prospects, its picturesque objects, and white edifices upon the slopes, half hidden by groves of rich and varied foliage, with the more boldly variegated hills rising above hills swelling into the distance. It was here, I thought, while contemplating the repose and beauty of the scene, that the idea of a retired life had charms even for the breast of a peer. "With the woman one loves," says Lord Lyttleton, in a letter to Mr. Bower, "with the friend of one's heart, and a good study of books, one might pass an age in this vale, and think it a day. If you have a mind to live long and renew your youth, come and settle at Ffestiniog." More than once, also, from its peculiar site and pleasant aspect, the vale of Ffestiniog has not undeservedly, by those who have observed the characteristic features of both, been compared with the valleys of Sicily and Greece,



and especially the celebrated vale of Tempé, with this advantage, indeed, that it has no infernal deity to run off with the village Proserpine, who may be gathering her apron full of flowers from its quiet fields, nor any lurking assassins to mar its beauty and endanger its possession, as had at one time its Attic original. But it stands in no need of classical resemblances to enhance its natural beauties, when beheld, richly wooded and finely watered as it is, in the glowing hues of the year, when the departing sun, illumining the surrounding peaks, reflects a radiant light upon the scene, which may well remind the traveller of the most lovely spots which he has ever visited in other lands. It is then that the little hamlet of Maentwrog, situated midway on the declivity of its verdant eminence, appears with most picturesque effect, and the river Dwyryd, fed by the Cynfael, and another neighbouring mountain-torrent, gives a silvery splendour to the prospect, combined with all that variegated beauty which is seen in no other Cambrian vale.

MAENTWROG takes its title from the stone of Turog, which stands in the churchyard, and perpetuates the name of a British saint, who lived about the year 610. The record belonging to St. Beuno, called the Tiboeth, which was formerly kept at Clynog Church, was written by this same Turog.

A day's fatigue, on foot, even while exploring the beauties of Maentwrog, would lead a traveller to say, with Sancho Panza, "Blessed is the man that first invented sleep." Or to apostrophise in those beautiful words from the Latin :—

"Though death's strong likeness in thy form I trace,
Come, Sleep, and fold me in thy soft embrace;
Come, gentle Sleep, that sweetest blessing give—
To die, thus living;—and thus dead, to live."

I soon found the bland influence of the poppy-god, and after a night of delicious rest, I arose early the ensuing morning,

with the intention of walking as far as Ffestiniog to breakfast. I took the old road, which, on one side, is bounded by a ravine, and on the other is overgrown by firs, whose darkening shadow, with the whistling of the fitful blast from the hollow of the hills, sweeping the trembling leaves across my path, communicated a peculiarly solemn air to the landscape, contrasting with the gloomy tints of the dawn, the warbling of birds, and the sounds of rural industry and mirth. A splendid sunrise and a brightening sky augured one more of those enviable days I had hitherto enjoyed; yet I had gone but a little way before a heavy mist—half fog, half rain—came driving up the shrouded valley, and in a few minutes completely enveloped the whole scene as in a cloud. In the hope that it would as quickly pass away, I took shelter under a hedge, where, however, I found myself in an ant's nest, and not relishing the extreme familiarity of these tiny creatures, and, seeing no prospect of the weather clearing up, I was fain to push forward, feeling, though for the first time, not in the best possible humour with my peripatetic mode of travelling.

Pedestrian miseries, however, which fly before a gleam of sunshine—a shepherd's path, if lost among the hills—the smoke of some distant cottage, or the village spire, at evening's fall,—are not the most difficult things to be borne; and, as I advanced, the sight of the far-swelling hills,—the sun-lit summits towering beyond,—the silvery Dwyryd stealing along luxuriant fields and meadows,—the lofty wooded mountains, which flank the sides of the opening vale, all conspired to awaken emotions only the more pleasurable from the passing gloom of the morning.

Ffestiniog is built on an eminence, overlooking the vale. Near the village are the terrific falls of the Cynfael. The way to them lies across the fields, in a pretty direct line from the front of the inn, and then winds through a wood to

the first fall, the distance being about half a mile. The upper one rushes over three projections of dark rocks, which rise like steps one above another, into a deep black basin, rendered still darker by the shadowing precipices, intermingled with huge protruding stony masses; while the darkness and solitude of the place are increased by the sad-coloured foliage of the branches, overhanging the rapid stream from each of its banks. A few yards lower down rises a bold columnar rock, called Pulpit Hugh Lloyd Cynfael, or Hugh Lloyd's Pulpit, rising from the bed of the river;* passing which, and crossing the river, by means of a rustic stone bridge, within five minutes' walk is seen the

* Of this bard, magician, and warrior, for he claimed all these titles, the following anecdote is recorded:—"When he was a young man, he made a stone seat to put at the door of his house, which was not far from hence; and his wife's sister was the first that sat upon it. 'Molly,' he said, 'you have sat first upon this bench, and you must pay me three kisses for it.' The demand was satisfied. Sometime afterwards his wife died, and he went to London; leaving his sister in-law, then married, and her husband. He enlisted into the Parliament's forces, where he soon obtained a commission; and he was in the army of General Monk at the restoration of Charles II. After having been from home many years, and at length growing old, he returned to his native country. Arriving at his own house, one fine Summer's evening, he saw his sister-in-law, her husband, and children, 'all now grown up,' sitting on the same stone bench, eating flummery and milk. He asked them in English, if they would give him a night's lodging? but none of them knew a word of this language. They, however, conjectured what he wanted, and shewed him a bed, the best in the cottage, but asked him to partake of their fare before he retired to rest. This he did, and, being satisfied with his hospitable reception, addressed them in Welsh, in the following extempore stanza, which may be thus translated:—

'For wines delicious mighty France is prais'd,
And various dainties are for London rais'd;
With butter, Holland half the world supplies,
But milk and flummery more than all I prize.'

'What! you are a Welshman, my good friend?' exclaimed his sister. 'Yes,' said he, 'I am: it is many years since I had three kisses from the

second fall. It is much less extensive than the other, and precipitates itself in a small stream down a shelving rock about forty feet in height. It then bounds along a narrow chasm, and, struggling among the many-coloured rocks, reflects a variety of tints, as it falls from slope to slope, till finding a more even bed, it at length meanders quietly through the vale, and mingles with the waters of the Dwyryd. Great caution is necessary in seeing these waterfalls, many places being overgrown by underwood, and the paths in others undermined by the action of wind and rain.

I made an excursion from Ffestiniog to the grand cataract and glen called Rhaiadr Cwm. This rude and stupendous scene is observed from the road leading towards Yspytty Evan and Pentre Veolas; but, to appreciate its sublimity, the traveller should descend the mountain, which, however, is almost an unfrequented solitude, although the neighbouring roads have recently been much improved. Seen, as I had the opportunity, when the sun had flared through his zenith, and the lengthening shadows began gradually to creep over the valley, the immensity of the rocks, and the wildness of the landscape, gave rise to feelings of wonder and surprise. Scrambling over the intervening objects, I reached an angle of a cliff, midway in the ascent, where the grandeur of the surrounding scenery cannot fail to interest the timid observer who, perhaps, would not dare to venture lower into the glen. The little stream is noticed, in its almost perpendicular course, sparkling over the rocks, after which it

female who sat first on this bench!' He was immediately recognized with the utmost joy. He then took out of his pocket a large purse filled with gold, and throwing it into her lap, 'Here,' said he, 'take this as a reward for your hospitality to the old English stranger, who is more than four-score years of age: he requires for it nothing more than a bed every night, and flummery and milk every day while he lives.'" From this time it is said that he resided with them till his death, which did not happen till some years afterwards.



dashes its crystal waters through the obstructions of the vale. The surrounding mountains are black and precipitous, and the glen, heathy and barren, appears more striking after viewing the rich and varied landscapes in the vale of Ffestiniog.

At the turnpike gate, near Ffestiniog, a road branches off to the south, and ascends a hill, at the head of which stands a small farm called Tyn y Ffridd, the owner of which I found at once intelligent and polite; for he not only named all the objects worthy of notice in the neighbourhood, but, a heavy shower of rain coming on, he proffered me shelter in his abode, in which cleanliness and comfort abounded. The table was soon spread, and I partook of his hospitable fare. After spending some time with him, I descended the hill for about half a mile, when the hoarse sounds of rolling waters betokened the near approach to some rapid stream. In a few minutes I reached the bridge called Pont Newydd, which carries the road over the river Cynfael. This spot will amply repay the traveller who delights in the picturesque, for the length of his walk. The bridge is a flat segmental arch of about thirty feet span, overgrown with ivy, clasping the river from side to side, resting its abutments on the immovable rocks, about forty feet above the fall of the waters. Large masses project on either side, contending for their ancient domain with struggling plants which have sprung from between their fissures, while the dashing element pours with fearful impetuosity from one steep to another, foaming and roaring through the dark hollows beneath. Clumps of luxuriant trees overhang the banks on each side, and through them the troubled stream, every now and then, discovered itself with fine effect, as the setting sun's rays lighted up the gauzy spray which stole amongst the umbrageous shades around. Before seeing this spot I had never even heard of it, and I will venture to say that it is rarely visited by the foot of the traveller; but this subject may be classed

amongst the finest scenes, on a small scale, in the Principality. Do, gentle reader, if thou canst read in Nature's book, and hast an ear for the solemn tones of her mysterious voice, step for once out of the every-day track of modern travellers, and take the trouble of inspecting the bridge of Pont Newydd.

CHAPTER XVI.

TRAWSFYNYDD—DOLGELLEY—BARMOUTH—MACHYNNLETH.

SMOOTH to the shelving brink a copious flood
Rolls fair and placid, where collected all,
In one impetuous torrent, down the steep
It thundering shoots, and shakes the country round;
At first an azure sheet, it rushes broad;
Then whitening by degrees, as prone it falls,
And from the loud resounding rocks below
Dash'd in a cloud of foam, it sends aloft
A hoary mist, and forms a ceaseless shower.
Nor can the tortured wave here find repose,
But, raging still amid the shaggy rocks,
Now flashes o'er the scatter'd fragments, now
Aslant the hollow channel rapid darts;
And falling fast from gradual slope to slope,
With wild infracted course and lessen'd roar,
It gains a safer bed, and steals at last
Along the mazes of the quiet vale.

Thomson.

I LEFT with lingering regret the romantic vales of Cynfael and Dwyryd, and bent my steps towards Trawsfynydd, passing over the Cynfael by the bridge of Pont Newydd, which I have before mentioned, and, taking a diverging road on the right, gained, after a walk of two miles, the direct turnpike which bears towards the south. It was here I observed a remarkable meteorological effect,—I might say, as regards my

own experience, a natural phenomenon, though by no means considered so, I was told, at this period of the year, in Wales,—that of the sky around being heavy and black, with the clouds resting on the hills, while the sun shone brightly on the mountain of Moelwyn, at a distance of four miles,—by which the perspective illusion of every object appearing close to, and clearly before the eye, was produced.

Rambling on my solitary way towards Trawsfynydd, I was considerably amused, on meeting the villagers and market women, to observe their tenacious love of the large, round beaver hat, the full sleeves, and dressy neck-kerchiefs. They looked cheerful and happy, and were mostly engaged in knitting as they passed by me; no bad example, I thought, to the young and old in other countries.

As I proceeded, the scenery soon became changed for features of a more sombre hue, with coarse, bleak heath, which continued beyond Trawsfynydd. Almost every village in the Principality has some natural curiosity or remnant of antiquity, which, in the eyes of a tourist, confers a degree of interest on its neighbourhood, and Trawsfynydd is not, in this respect, without its attractions. A common near it is traversed by a Roman road, supposed to have been constructed by Helena, daughter of a British prince, and wife of the Emperor Maximus. It is at present only to be distinguished by its elevation above the general level of the plain, being completely covered with turf; but, on digging, the several layers of stones with which it is formed are easily discovered. Cromlechs, also, and carnedds are numerous on the hills, which, though now bare, were anciently, in many places, covered with forests of oak. The situation of Trawsfynydd is particularly wild and lonely, and the village, walled in by bleak and barren mountains, seems as though it were shut out from the rest of the world. It would be a convenience to tourists in general to procure a carriage at Ffestiniog or

Maentwrog, and ride about five or six miles beyond Trawsfynydd, which will enable them to inspect the falls of the Cain and Mawddach, and to proceed to Dolgelley without much fatigue.

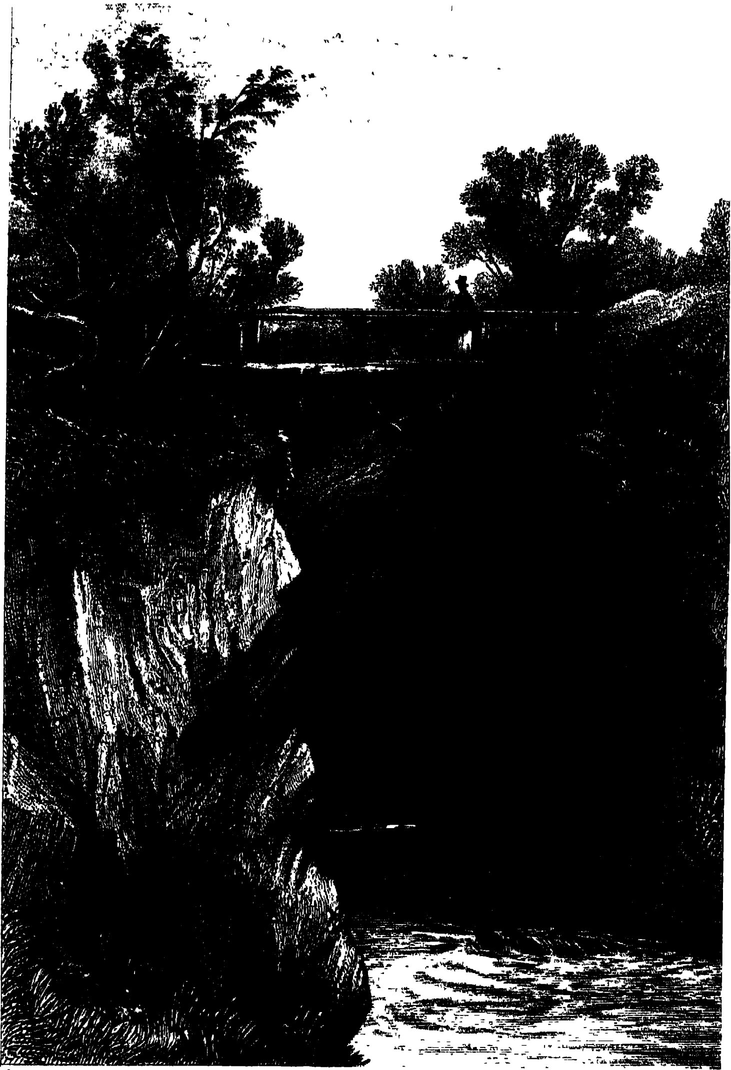
A few miles beyond Trawsfynydd the country becomes richly wooded; and the hazel, the honeysuckle, and blackberry, intermingle in all their varieties in the hedge-rows by the way-side. Taking a mountain path to the left, near Pont Dolgefeiliau, at perhaps the distance of a mile, I reached the grand waterfall named Pistyll Cain,—the Spout of the Cain. The river here is contracted into a comparatively narrow stream, which precipitates itself over nearly perpendicular rocks, lying in rugged horizontal strata, from a height of about 150 feet,—now descending in one clear unbroken sheet of water,—then breaking into separate torrents, from the stony masses which interrupt its fall,—and again uniting to send its fretted foaming stream into the dark gulph below, amidst the bright foliage of the oak, the birch, and the elm, that spring from every crevice, and overhang its tumultuous course. Viewed from the summit of the fall, with the broken and magnificent prospect below, the rich dark woods interchanging their vivid hues with huge masses of rocks, and the swelling mountains nearing the scene, and towering in sublime grandeur in the distance, the subject is one of such extraordinary materials, as can alone be justly apprehended and felt by the eye and heart of the poet and painter.

Not far from the junction of the Cain with the Mawddach, is another waterfall, which possesses its own peculiar interest and beauty. It is not so high as its neighbour, but the stream is much more shattered, and, after leaping over three successive rock-ledges, it falls into a large basin, worn and shaped by the ceaseless cataract. Rude fragments from the adjoining cliffs lie scattered in the channel and over the foreground, and the scene of the fall exhibits an amphitheatre of rocks and trees mingled in sober harmony together. Not

far from this spot is a rustic bridge thrown over the noisy flood, which clasps the alpine banks in picturesque simplicity, and adds greatly to the primitive beauty of the picture.

The traveller must now trace his steps back to the high road, and, at the distance of two miles, he will reach the estate of Dolymelynen, nearly covered with fine timber trees. I was much delighted with this luxuriant and secluded place, which presents an extended reach of beautiful forest scenery. The oak, lime, walnut, and ash, are of magnificent dimensions, but nothing can exceed the beauty and exuberance of the acacia. I had visited this sylvan retreat some years before, when spring was arraying the trees, shrubs, and flowers in their early yet interesting and charming foliage. At that time, I well remember, the simple and truthful pastoral lines of the poet Clare often occurred to my mind, giving a sort of intellectual expression to the beautiful face of Nature.

Through the estate of Dolymelynen rolls the river Camlan, which is one continued series of falls from its source, high among the mountains, to its junction with the Mawddach in the valley below. One of the larger falls (which, in reality, forms three falls) is called the Rhaiadr Du, where the water tumbles over rocks more than fifty feet in height, and, especially after heavy rain, descends almost with the roar of thunder. The surrounding scenery is well wooded, and the black rocks on each side of the rapid stream present a singular picture, being for the most part covered with pure white lichen. When the observer is seated on the hill above the falls, the opposite mountain of Penrhos is seen closing the extent of this narrow vale. On the hill are two copper mines, and on Vigra, Cae Mawr, Penrhos, and Dolyfrwynog, are several others. Dolymelynen is five miles from Dolgelley. A walk of a mile brought me to the pleasantly situated little inn, at Ganllwyd, called the "Oakley Arms." This house is erected close to the road leading from Maentwrog to Dolgelley,



[illegible] — W Radclyffe

and within a stone's throw of the angry river Mawddach. It is encircled by majestic hills, which were then mostly covered with heath and fern in blossom, giving an appearance of richness and beauty even to the most arid and barren parts. Immediately before the house rises the mountain of Penrhos,—the river washing its base. On the right hand, apparently at the end of the vale, appears Cefn Mawr; while behind, as if to protect this charming retreat from the westerly gales, winds the long and broad range of Craig Cau.

This little inn at Ganllwyd presents an admirable station for the artist, the angler, and the lover of nature. It is, for the hardy pedestrian, within an easy journey of numerous remarkable points of scenery, embracing four lakes and six rivers, besides numerous rippling mountain-streams, some of which abound with cataracts or falls. A gentleman, who was staying at this inn while I was there, showed me, as a great curiosity, the handbill of a person who was, for many years, a guide to the surrounding scenery. The following is an extract from this facetious publication:—" Robert Edwards, second son of the celebrated tanner, William Edwards, ap Griffith, ap Morgan, ap David, ap Owen, ap Llewelyn, ap Cadwaladar; great great great grandson of an illegitimate daughter of the illustrious hero Sir Rice ap Thomas! by Ann, daughter of Howell ap Jenkins, of Ynys y Maesgwyn, who was the thirteenth in descent from Cadwgan, a lineal descendant of Bledwyn ap Cynfyn, Prince of Powis. Since his nativity full two and eighty times hath the sun rolled to his summer solstice; fifty years was he host of the Hen and Chickens ale-house, Pen y bont, twenty of which he was apparitor to the late Reverend Father in God, John, Lord Bishop of Bangor, and his predecessors: by chance made a glover, by genius a fly-dresser and angler. Is now, by the All-Divine assistance, conductor to and over the most tremendous mountain, Cader Idris, to the stupendous cataracts

of Cayne and Mawddach, and to the enchanting cascades of Dol y Melynllyn, with all its beautiful and romantic scenery."

Dr. Mavor, who employed this oddity, says in his tour, "he is a slender man, about five feet four inches in height, and, notwithstanding his advanced age, hopped and skipped about the room with all the vivacity and agility of a schoolboy. The manner in which he expresses himself is as droll as his appearance. He was dressed in a blue coat with yellow buttons, a pair of old boots, and a cocked hat and feathers of enormous size. His whole air was military, though he had never been a soldier. He procured several little horses. Nothing could be so amusing as to see the guide, *en militaire*, with a long white rod in his hand, like another Merlin, setting out on a full canter from the door of the inn, on his Welsh poney, followed by a little cavalcade, who could scarcely keep their seats for laughter. He talked much of *curiosity-men*, meaning naturalists; and enumerated among his followers some eminent names in science and literature; among the rest, Sir Joseph Banks and the late Earl of Bristol." Another traveller describes him as "a little shrivelled old man, about eighty-five years old, yet active as a goat, and vivacious as a viper, with a great deal of low humour."

Proceeding near the course of the river, I entered the pretty village of Llanelltyd, pleasantly situated on the banks of the Mawddach, at the head of the picturesque vale. The parish is very extensive, embracing in its circuit the ancient Abbey of Kymmer, which I shall describe in my route from Dolgelley to Barmouth. The vale of Llanelltyd boasts of beauties peculiar to itself; and it is to this distinctive feature that so much of the charm we still find in the recurrence of valleys, streams, and woodlands, still unexhausted, is chiefly to be referred. Here, as I saw it, under the shadow of a cloudy day,—with the murmurs of the river, mingled with the



whistling winds from the mountain hollows, the richly diversified foliage assuming still new lights and shades with the varying sky, the parting sunbeams or gathering twilight,—it had more of the wild and sombre than the beautiful, for which it has been so often extōlled. As I bent my steps along the sedgy banks of the brawling stream, and marked the evening shadows lengthening on the distant heights, and the thin mist gradually shrouding the magnificent prospects spread around, the thoughts of many of my favourite poets again rose fresh before me, recalled no less by their singular truth and beauty than by the hour and the scene.

A pleasant walk of about a mile and half beyond Llanelltyd brings the traveller to DOLGELLEY, which is encircled by mountains, and seated on the river Wnion, here a broad, shallow stream, over which is a handsome bridge of seven arches. It has a neat church, containing some old monuments; and a commodious county-hall, in which is a portrait of Sir Robert Vaughan, by the President of the Royal Academy. The picture, however, is suspended in so bad a situation, that its merits may be said to be altogether lost. This little town would furnish excellent head quarters to the traveller. Though irregularly built, and without any architectural attractions in itself, it is environed with subjects of great natural interest, and has within reach the waterfalls which I have described in my route from Ffestiniog to the secluded vale of Llanelltyd, the scenery around Barmouth, the mountain chain of Cader Idris, and the beautiful lake of Tal y Llyn.

Whatever might be the quality and variety of attractions which were ready to allure me out of Dolgelley, my first visit next morning was to Nannau Park, the seat of Sir R. Vaughan.* The house stands on an eminence, and the road

* Of this ancient and hospitable house it is related, that it was formerly a custom to fill twelve casks, containing a hundred and twenty gallons each, with

thither from the town is one continued ascent, so that it is said "to stand higher than any gentleman's house in Britain." From various parts of it I paused to enjoy the delightful views obtained over the vale of the Hazle, traversed in its whole extent by the river Wnion.

The grounds of Nannau are entered under a fine gateway, and, in approaching the house, at least a mile distant from the entrance to the park, I passed along the side of a little murmuring stream, and through a succession of dingles, covered with blackberry bushes, ivy, and moss. The weather being hot, it was pleasant to pause from time to time under the shades of the gigantic old trees that flung their gnarled boughs over the road, the spaces between them being here and there filled up by an exuberant growth of underwood. Innumerable blackbirds, linnets, and other singing birds filled the air with music; and, except the buzzing of flies, rising in clouds from the copses, and the rippling of the brook at my feet, no other sounds met the ear. Nothing could be more rural or picturesque, more calm or tranquil than the whole scene. In the foliage of the woods, there was all that variety of rich tint produced by the intermingling of the oak, the lime, the walnut, the laurel, the acacia, the ash, the fir, and the beech, grouped and contrasted with infinite beauty.

The gardens of Nannau are extensive, and laid out with much taste. Owing, however, to the under gardener's entire ignorance of the English language, and his superintendent being absent that day, I probably lost much of the history of the grounds, which, related with all that confident, unconscious prolixity, known only in the present day to this description of chroniclers, might have proved exceedingly amusing

strong ale, denominated after the first twelve emperors of Rome, and that each cask was twelve years old before it was tapped, and as soon as it had passed its minority there was another brewed, so that the imperial series was always complete.

both to me and my readers. Still I made in his company the round of hothouses and conservatories, and greatly admired the number of beautiful exotics collected on one of the highest spots devoted to horticulture in the kingdom.

The mansion is spacious and delightfully situated. The chief attraction of the spot, which is probably not exceeded in point of scenery by any in the kingdom, lies in the beauty and romantic traditions of the park. In the higher part are the remains of a British post, noticed by all tourists, called Moel Orthrwn, or the Hill of Oppression, having probably, as Pennant conjectures, been formerly held by some tyrant; and here, also, until lately, stood an immense oak, blasted and hollowed by time, in which, according to popular belief, Owen Glyndwr inhumed the fresh bleeding corpse of his treacherous cousin, Howel Sele, who had been bribed to make an attempt upon his life, where it remained concealed for forty years. Pennant and Evans, with an unskilful application of their classical reading, talk of dryads and hamadryads, in connection with the fatal tree, and inform us that it was denominated "the Hollow Oak, the Haunt of Demons." But the only demon known to the peasants of the neighbourhood would be the ghost of Howel Sele, or a White Lady, or the Little People, as they call the fairies.

In Pennant's time, the trunk of this patriarchal tree was twenty-seven feet and a half in circumference; it was in the last stage of decay, and pierced by age into the form of a Gothic arch. Its end is thus described by Sir Richard Colt Hoare:—"During a visit to Sir Robert Vaughan, in the year 1813, this aged tree, mentioned by Mr. Pennant, attracted my notice; and, on the morning of the 13th of July, I made a drawing of it, in one of the most sultry days I ever felt; the succeeding night was equally hot, and, on the same night, this venerable oak fell to the ground."

In descending the hill towards Dolgelley, I enjoyed a

magnificent view of the alpine chain of Cader Idris, extending from the north-east to the south-west in a line parallel with the shore. The mist still rested on the inferior heights, in some places concealing their summits, in others stretching in slender horizontal lines or masses along their slopes. All the adjacent eminences are richly wooded, and though the trees, in most places, have the appearance of recent planting, yet they are no less imposing than those of natural primeval forests. But for me "the old hereditary trees," which inspired the muse of Cowley, have a charm no new plantations can boast; and, as I retraced my steps, the hills and groves of my boyhood, with youthful companions no longer at my side, rose in all the strength of reality before me; and for the moment I gave way to one of those delightful day-dreams in which the imagination will at times indulge as a kind of set-off against the frowns of the world: like the rays of a glowing sunset, for a few brief instants these airy reveries disperse the black, deepening shadows which portend the approach of night, and throw at least a passing radiance upon our homeward path. After dinner I rambled by the side of a small stream which issues from Geu-graig on Cader Idris, through a forest of larch and beech, at the back of the town; at the top of the hill is a large mill in which the manufacture of flannel is carried on.

My path now lay towards Barmouth, and I, therefore, left Dolgelley the next morning, by what is called the Old Road. I surmounted the steep hill, and branching off to the right, by a foot-path across some meadows, turned up the old sycamore avenue to visit the ruins of Kymmer Abbey, or Y Vanner, as it is better known by the country people, lying in desolation by the side of the Mawddach, about a quarter of a mile above the bridge. Viewed in combination with the rich diversity of objects presenting themselves along the course of the stream, the approach to this time-worn mon-



ument of vanished ages has something sombre and impressive. Above, in the distance, towers the dark rock of Moel Orthrwn; below, several valleys, watered by the intermingling of different streams, their banks studded with pleasant homesteads; on one side appears the bridge, and on the other extends the flat ground on which stand the relics of the antique abbey. Only a portion of the church is now to be seen; the great hall or refectory, and a part of the abbot's residence, have resigned their more costly and spiritual charge for the less dignified, but not less necessary, avocations of a farm-house, from which are seen the lofty peaks of Cader Idris towering into the clouds. The east side is in the best state of preservation, and through its close mantle of ivy may be perceived the small narrow windows peculiar to old religious edifices. I observed, also, some rather minute Gothic pillars and arches against the south wall, and an aperture, in which, probably, was preserved the holy water. The space of ground within the walls is more than usually circumscribed.

According to Mr. Vaughan, the antiquary, it was founded by the grandsons of Owen Gwynedd; the monks were of the Cistercian order, and the abbey dedicated to the holy Virgin. It may be said of her priests, as of the humble rustics by whom they were surrounded, that tradition has not commemorated "their homely joys and destiny obscure," any more than the astonishing cures or miracles, which they wrought under the auspices of their lady-patroness,—but few having the good fortune of the gentle Saint Winifred. The charter of the abbey offers a striking instance of the superstition of the age, and those delusions to which the minds of princes are equally subjected with that of the rudest peasant. The most ample grants, "authority over lakes, rivers, and seas; all kinds of birds and beasts, wild or tame; mountains, woods, things moveable and immoveable; every thing upon or

under the lands contained in the deed, with full liberty of digging for hidden treasures," are among the privileges of the good brethren of old. An antiquary of great celebrity likewise observes, with reference to their good taste, that "the abbey is situated in as pleasant a spot as ever he saw. It was, in short, a colony of monks sent away as bees are when the hive is too full. But, idle as they were, the old monks were men of exquisite taste."

One of the pleasant circumstances attending my summer wanderings, was the delightful weather I enjoyed—sky and air such as could not fail to delight a pedestrian's heart—with clear mellow days, and serene refulgent nights, which painted the scenes before me in a thousand brilliant hues, and under a continual variety of form and aspect. To have studied the deciduous beauties of the foliage, or the vales and lakes, in the bright splendour of the season's noon, or under the mild lustre of heaven's young queen, as she "filled her horn with new born light," would of itself have afforded ample return for lonely walks, and some toil and adventure, which brought me into connection with those more sequestered and wildly beautiful spots, which in Wales often greet the eye of the enthusiast of nature. Nor was the pleasure diminished by thus coming oftener in contact with the primitive character and pastoral habits of the people, their appearance and their manners, yet highly national amidst so many changes, and upon which, without destroying their form and their simplicity, the genius of improvement is happily engrafting new ideas, and, with more general education and improved prospects, still better institutions. Reflections on the future, which I indulged by the way-side, were thus far from an unpleasant nature; and the recollection of what I had seen, and the onward impulse towards yet greater improvements, struck me more forcibly at every step.

These reflections passed off like one of Summer's own

clouds as I left the ruinous abbey and regained the road, passing the bridge and the pretty village of Llanelltyd, and turning to the left for Barmonth. It is just beyond this point the eye commands a prospect of surpassing interest and loveliness, one which leaves nothing to be desired with regard to picturesque effect. The waters of the Mawddach open in front, often enlivened by skiffs and pleasure boats; on both sides appear, agreeably alternated, a succession of wooded eminences projecting into the estuary, producing a fine scenic illusion, by concealing the termination of the river, and giving it the appearance of a wide extensive lake. To the south, from beyond the banks, are beheld the vast, majestic cliffs surrounding on all sides, and half concealing, the airy summit of Cader Idris; and, towards the bridge, a variety of prospects stretching in an easterly direction.

The herds were grazing quietly along the banks; the white sail was just seen bending its homeward path; and to the light wanton airs, which not unfrequently frolic through a midsummer's day and relieve its fervours, there succeeded a solemn stillness,—one of those deep, calm pauses in the stir of life, and in the very atmosphere, which momentarily is felt even in crowded cities, but which now, pursuing my lonely way along the vale, had a singular and unwonted effect upon the mind. The feeling was more strongly impressed, also, by contrast with the richly variegated views of hills and streams which I had that morning beheld through the strong, clear light of a brilliant sunrise, and with a beautiful rainbow, such as I had never before remarked, or even thought possible —with its perfect reflection in the depth of its glorious hues upon the hills, of which the declivities shone with all the mingled colours of the radiant arch which spanned their majestic brows.

It was in a deeply moralising mood, then, on that evening,—philosophically commenting upon the ever fresh and

varying aspect of external nature, and how strangely it appeals to the heart, presenting so true a type of man's change and destiny,—that I approached Pont Ddu. Upon my left flowed the bright river; the towering summits of the giant Idris—almost baffling the sight—stretching far beyond; around and behind me lay the deepening, shadowy vale; while to the right the bold hills presented the appearance of huge mountain waves in the rolling mists and fast gathering twilight. The silvery tints and beauty of the river, pursuing its destined path, like the current of life, through the heart of these wild and dreary mountains; the occasional views of woods, meadows, and corn fields, intersected by some branch streams, and again the wilder moor, the mountain hollow, the bushy dells, through which is caught at intervals some flashing cataract,—made my walk along the Mawddach among the most interesting periods of my life.

Speaking of the road from Llanelltyd to Barmouth, Mr. Pratt says, "Its beauties are so manifold and extraordinary, that they literally beggar description. New pastures of the most exuberant fertility, new woods rising in the majesty of foliage, the road itself curving in numberless unexpected directions, at one moment shut into a verdant recess, so contracted that there seems neither carriage nor bridle-way out of it; at another, the azure expanse of the main ocean filling the eye. On one side rocks glittering in all the colours of that beauty which constitutes the sublime, and of an height which diminishes the wild herds that browse or look down upon you from the summit, where the largest animal appears insignificantly minute. On the other hand, plains, villas, cottages, or copses, with whatever tends to form that milder grace which belongs to the beautiful."

The entrance to BARMOUTH, or Abermaw, as it is designated from its river, on the day I reached it, was particu-



larly pleasant to me.* The weather was beautiful; the sunset in which I beheld the surrounding landscape, and the far more splendid and magnificent view of the bay, and the sea stretching far beyond, was such as I shall not easily forget.

The river, taking its course to the south of the town, is here divided into two channels, between which lies the little island, called Ynis Brawd, or the Friar's Island. I find this circumstance alluded to in the entertaining and accurate Itinerary of Leland, who observes, in his own quaint manner, "at the north of Maw river lyeth a little islet, scant a bow shot over, withowte habitation. At ebbe it is fresche water, and at fludde salt." Thus was formed the harbour, which anciently, we are told, before it was inundated by the sea, occasioned by the shifting of the sands, afforded pasturage for flocks and herds.

The houses are disposed in a singular and unpleasant manner on the sides of an immense sloping rock, which shelters them on the eastern side; and whole rows appear standing on the ledges, like shelves one above another; in winding up the narrow paths among the buildings, at different stages, the inhabitants may be seen standing at the doors, quietly looking over the chimneys of their neighbours. The approach is by steps cut into the rocks, the floor of one range being nearly level with that of the roof below it. There is consequently little necessity for smoking in a population so situated—the lower tier regularly regaling the one next above it with strong warm puffs—more especially when the wind is in their favour. But the good people of Bar-

* For the sake of the lover of etymology, it may be observed, that this name is derived from that of Abermaw, abbreviated into Bermaw—a compound itself, formed from the name of the river Mawddach, or *Maw* and that of *Aber*, the conflux of the stream—and again corrupted, for the sake of euphony, by us barbarous English, into the modern sounding Barmouth.

mouth only in part follow the scriptural injunction of "building their houses on a rock," for they show, also, a predilection for the sand, and a street has been formed close to the beach. A more inconvenient place for a town can hardly be imagined; for the houses in the lower part are frequently half choked up with sand blown from the shore. One could hardly believe that a site would be selected for a church, where the yard should be filled with sand to the depth of three or four feet, and drifted against the church itself, eight or ten, on one side almost blocking up the windows: yet this I saw when I was at Barmouth last year.

Barmouth was considered to the north-west part of the kingdom, much like Weymouth and other fashionable watering places are to the south, and was resorted to during the summer months, not only by families in the Principality, but many others residing in the surrounding counties. But Barmouth was overrated, and, as a watering place, is now falling into decay. Only one respectable inn—the Cors y Gedol Arms—and that not of a superior kind, is in the town. The sands, extending along the beach for several miles, are very fine and hard, and the bathing as excellent as can be desired. The parish church is more than a mile from Barmouth; but for public convenience a chapel of ease—of which I have spoken above—was erected by subscription a few years ago, where divine service is performed in the English language every Sunday.

Barmouth is the chief haven in Merionethshire, but the entrance to the port is dangerous from the incessant shifting of the sand, particularly on the two banks called the north and south bars. To defend it from destruction by the tides, large hillocks of sand, made firm and bound together by the friendly aid of two stringent runners, the *arundo arevaria* and *elymus arevaria*, which, spreading their long creeping roots, present a vegetable bulwark sufficient to keep back the

waves. The high mountains round the harbour afford the advantages to be derived from landmarks, for steering inwards during foggy weather. A pier has been constructed for increasing the depth of water, facilitating the lading and unlading of cargos, and buoys are placed on each bar, which tend to diminish the number of accidents arising from sudden squalls and tempests. Spite of the natural disadvantages, however, the people of the port contrive to carry on a pretty good trade with Ireland and other parts.

Having occasion to return to Dolgelley, on my route for Machynlleth, I hired a boat to convey me with the tide up the Mawddach. The windings of this wild river amidst the gigantic rocks that spring from its still wilder shores, gave it the appearance of being land-locked at the close of each succeeding reach. The foot of the giant mountain restrains its impetuous course, as it flows towards the sea, while the angry pent-up stream, rolling for ages against that rocky barrier, has formed its sides into numerous hollows and bays. On the left the mountains stretch away towards Harlech, clothed with the purple of the heath and wild thyme; on the right rises that superb chain of rocks of which Cader Idris is the centre. Within three miles of Dolgelley the stream becomes too shallow for a boat to proceed, and the traveller has to walk or ride the remaining distance.

The following morning gave the promise of a fine day, and I determined upon making an excursion over Cader Idris. This mountain is one of the most lofty in Wales, and forms a part of the great chain of hills which runs nearly parallel with the coast for many miles, in connection with the Arrans and the Arrenigs, and more inland, towards Corwen, with the Berwyn range. Proceeding over the hill which leads to Towyn, I reached a small lake, and turning to the left, commenced the ascent. After great labour for three or four hours, and consequent fatigue, I reached the summit; and the

pool Llyn y Cae showed itself, situated among high rocks, whose weather-beaten cliffs overhang the water; but the thick mists, wafted from the sea, prevented that expansive prospect which I should otherwise have enjoyed. Mr. Aikin has enriched his narrative with a description of the grand and picturesque scene he witnessed, the following extract from which leaves nothing to be desired:—"We were now above all the eminences within a vast expanse, and as the clouds gradually cleared away, caught some grand views of the surrounding country. The huge rocks, which we before looked up to with astonishment, were now far below our feet, and many a small lake appeared in the valleys between them. To the north, Snowdon and its dependencies shut up the scene; on the west, we saw the whole curve of the bay of Cardigan, bounded at a great distance by the Carnarvon mountains, and nearer, dashing its white breakers against the rocky coast of Merioneth. The southern horizon was bounded by Plinlimmon, the bay of Swansea, the channel, peeping through the opening of the Brecon mountains; and on the east, the eye glanced over the lake of Bala, the two Arrenig mountains, the two Arrans, and the long chain of Berwyn mountains, to the Breiddin hills on the confines of Shropshire. Dimly, in the distant horizon, was beheld the Wrekin, rising alone from the plain of Salop."

At the foot of the mountain is the little village of Tal y Llyn, which borrows its name from the church at the head of the lake, not unmeetly denominated by the people "the Charming Retreat." The church—as imple antique building—is dedicated to St. Mary. The parish extends about eight miles, embracing in its circuit a large portion of the mountainous chain. The whole vicinity, wood, and hill, and lake—stirred by the winds, or clothed with the varied hues of the year—wore a highly picturesque yet dreary aspect; and I took great delight in exploring a number of bold, romantic streams and falls, all within the limits of this interesting



district. Tal y Llyn,—the Head of the Lake,—with its little church, stands on the west end of the pool, in a long valley, lying below the lofty ranges of Cader Idris. Looking north-east, the vale is contracted by the mountain bases, with their sides broken into a thousand crags, some sharp and conical, and others overhanging, as if ready to fall upon the heedless traveller, who wends his way beneath their shadows. Pen y Delyn, or the Harp Rock, is there, bearing a resemblance in its figure to that instrument, with its indented and perforated summit, ready to receive the first breath of the morning, and to herald the rising beam of the Great Luminary with the fabled music of Memnon,—and Llam y Ladron too, or the Thieves' Leap,—the Tarpeian Rock,—from whose fearful top, it is said, the ancient Britons used to cast their felon brethren.

Tal y Llyn, for the village gives its name to the sheet of water, is assuredly one of the most beautiful of lakes, and deserves all the eulogy bestowed upon it by the popular voice. It extends above one mile in length and nearly half a mile in breadth; part of its boundary consists of highly cultivated pastures, rendered more picturesque from the circumstances of the higher land, which reaches a considerable way up the mountain, affording a sheep walk. This lake is the property of Colonel Vaughan, a gentleman to whose courtesy and good nature strangers, no less than friends, are indebted for the amusement of a day's angling at pleasure,* and if they prefer a sail, there is a boat at hand for their accommodation. Few waters furnish a better supply of trout and eels—the latter are considered a great delicacy, owing to the peculiar nutriment they find in the deep coating moss of the bottoms. Here are both the lake and the common

* Medwin mentions 500 trout having been taken in five days out of this lake, by three brother anglers.

river-trout, the last of which come with the streams springing from the mountains. They are chiefly taken with the fly, and vary in size from half a pound to two pounds each.

A walk of about seven miles, through highly picturesque and delightful scenery, conducts the wanderer to the ancient town of MACHYNLLETH,* situated on the road leading to Aberystwith, and near the confluence of the rivers Dulas and Dovey. It is the centre of the woollen manufacture, and does considerable business in tanning,—occupations singularly at variance with its former military reputation. It was once the Maglona of the Romans, and had a lieutenant stationed there, in the time of Honorius, to awe the mountaineers. About two miles distant, near Penalt, is a spot denominated Cefn Caer, where many Roman coins have been found, and the traces are still visible of an old circular fortification.†

The spacious entrance to the Senate-house, now used for

* Or Man cyn llaith,—pronounced Mahuntleth,—the place at the upper end of the flat or low land.

† Mathafarn, the seat of Davidd Llwyd ap Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, the bard and seer, who flourished from 1470 to 1490, is on the banks of the Dovey in this parish. The Earl of Richmond, in his march from Milford, lodged one night with his friend Llwyd at Mathafarn: in his anxiety for the issue of his hazardous enterprise, he privately requested the opinion of his host, who was a most distinguished prophet. The seer is said to have cautiously replied, that a question of such importance could not be immediately answered, and that he would give his reply in the morning. He was greatly perplexed by the question, and his wife (for women are generally wiser in their day and generation than their pretending lords) observed an unusual and inexplicable gravity in his manner, the remainder of the evening: she enquired into the cause, and upon being informed, she exclaimed, with much astonishment, "How can you possibly have any difficulty about your answer? Tell him that the issue of his enterprise will be most successful and glorious. If your prediction be verified, you will receive honours and rewards; but if it fail, depend upon it, he will never come here to reproach you." In November, 1644, the Parliamentary forces burnt Mathafarn, and reduced this part of the country to subjection to the Commonwealth or protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.

business, denotes a more honourable occupancy in past times. It was here the active Glyndwr, in 1402, summoning the nobles and gentry, advanced his title to the newly conquered Principality. Among these came Sir David Gam, a chieftain of the county of Brecknock, who, though related to the heroic Glyndwr, conceived the base design of assassinating him in a private conference. He was discovered, and would have been instantly put to death, but for the intercession of powerful friends. He escaped on condition of joining the Welsh cause; but the double traitor again turning against his magnanimous countryman, Owen kept him in close confinement at Machynlleth, and burnt his house to the ground. On his escape he took refuge in the English Court, attended Henry V. in his wars, and, on the eve of the battle of Agincourt, on returning from reconnoitring the enemy, he informed the king, that "there were enough to kill, enough to be made prisoners, and enough to run away."*

The Town-hall is a plain, convenient building, erected by the late Sir W. W. Wynne, in which courts leet are held twice in the year. Few Welsh towns have kept pace with the spirit of modern improvement more than Machynlleth, of which the new road to Towyn, which offers many beautiful and picturesque views, is an excellent example. The portion between Penal and Aberdovey, in particular, cut out of the solid rock, abounds in delightful prospects of the Cardigan coasts, and of the sea stretching far away.

The aged prince and bard, Llywarch Hên, the contemporary of the renowned Arthur, retired in his old age to a little hut at Dôl-Giog, not far from this town, after having lost his "four and twenty brave sons, wearing the golden chain, the high-prized badge of honour of a British warrior," and his

* Sir David Gam, is believed to be the Captain Fluellen of Shakspeare in his beautiful drama of Henry V.

own feudal domain, in the fearful wars of those times. Here he spent the remnant of his days in company with Poverty and his Harp,—not unfrequently found associated together. The aged poet is honourably recorded in the Welsh triads, as one of "the three disinterested princes of the Isle of Britain." Who can read the plaintive elegy descriptive of his fallen fortunes without a thrill of sorrow?

"No more the mansion of delight,
Cynddylan's hall is dark to-night;
No more the midnight hour prolongs
With fire, and lamps, and festive songs.
Its trembling bards afflicted shun
The hall bereaved of Cyndrwyn's son;
Its joyous visitants are fled;
Its hospitable fires are dead;
No longer, ranged on either hand,
Its dormitory couches stand;
But all above, around, below,
Dread sights, dire sounds, and shrieks of woe!
Awhile I'll weep Cynddylan slain,
And from the weak desponding strain,
Awhile I'll soothe my troubled breast,
Then, in eternal silence rest."

CHAPTER XVII.

DINAS MOWDDY—BALA—LLANDRILLO—WELSHPOOL—MONTGOMERY.

"NATURE here
Wantons as in her prime; and plays at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweets,
Wild above rule or art."

GLOOMY wastes and far-spreading tracts of moorland, with their black turbaries intersected by walls of peat and dykes of dark waters, stretch south of Machynlleth, as far as the mountain of Plinlimmon; these I had intended to traverse in order to explore the source of the river Wye, which rises in the midst of the bog-turf on the other side of it;* but the weather becoming tempestuous, and being little acquainted with the localities, I judged it more prudent to rest awhile, and postpone this excursion till another opportunity, turning my steps towards Dinas Mowddy and Bala. From Machynlleth a rough road, traversing mountain and moor,

* In my volume on South Wales a detailed description is given of the varied and exquisite scenery of the river Wye, comprehending many renowned works of art, which give additional interest to sublime and interesting views. The coldest observer cannot fail being delighted with this romantic stream, here quietly gliding between luxuriant foliage—there fantastically meandering over its rocky bed.

towards Llanidloes, passes over portions of this range of hills, and one still more wild leads to the Devil's Bridge.

There is a road on each side of the river from Machynlleth to Dinas Mowddy, that on the right being the better one for carriages. Each presents scenery of the most beautiful and interesting description, blending the wild and the lovely in successive pictures throughout the whole extent of the valley of the Dovey. The village of Mallwyd,*—the Grey Stone or Rock,—is pleasantly situated on the high road leading from Shrewsbury to Dolgelley, and within a mile and a half of Dinas Mowddy. In the little churchyard is a yew tree, which the chroniclers of the village, from father to son, have handed down as the patriarch of seven centuries. It has nine distinct trunks, and the circumference of the united branches measures upwards of two hundred feet. The stranger standing on this spot, when he looks upon the primeval rocks and "everlasting hills" that rear themselves in gigantic stature

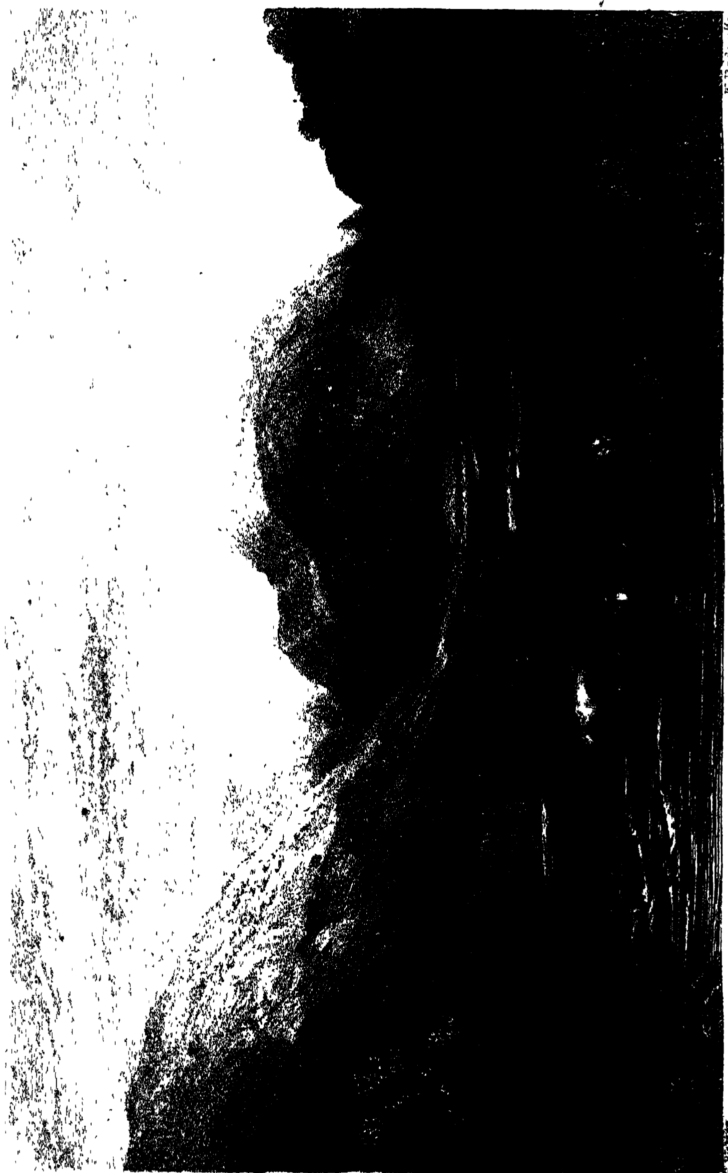
* The church of this village is dedicated to St. Tydecho, a saint who came into Britain from Armorica in the time of Prince Arthur. After the death of that renowned warrior, he retired to this spot, and led a most austere life, lying on the bare stones, and wearing a shirt of hair, but employing his time usefully in teaching the natives an improved system of Georgics, and in giving himself to all the exercises of hospitality. Marvellous things are related of this holy man, amongst which is that of converting the brook Llaethnant, the source of the Dovey, into milk for the use of the poor in time of great scarcity. The brook still retains its name, the signification of which is the Milk Stream, in commemoration of the miracle. Prince Maelgwyn, a froward youth, living at that time in this neighbourhood, ran off with the saint's oxen while they were at team; the next day wild stags were seen performing their office, and a grey wolf harrowing after them. Maelgwyn, enraged at this, brought his milk-white dogs to chase the deer, while he sat on a blue stone to enjoy the diversion; when he attempted to rise he found himself fixed to the rock, from which he was not released till he had most humbly begged the saint's pardon. The reader will observe that I do not vouch for the truth of these facts as grave matters of history, but only relate them for his edification and amusement. Such, however is veritably the legend.

all around, feels himself more immediately in the presence of Him, "the High and Lofty One," who "bade the mountains stand fast;" but a feeling more allied to his kind springs up as he surveys the conglomerated trunk of the old yew, planted by some human hand, watered and watched with the solicitude in which he can share,—commemorating, perhaps, some event, national or domestic, in which the same sympathies were interested that beat high and tenderly in his own breast, —waving its young branches, it may be, over the head of him who first planted it; and oh, what reflections are connected with looking upon a withered trunk, and the thought that it was once green and young in ages far beyond all memory!—living through generation of children and fathers, —and when all these have passed away, gazed upon by him, a stranger, the heir of these past centuries. In the neighbourhood of Mallwyd are several cascades, the largest of which is at Pont Vallwyd; it is formed by the Dovey, which at this place rushes through a confined channel against a high rock, from whence it falls into a large pool below.

Dinas Mowddy is an insignificant town picturesquely situated on the declivity of a rock, not far from the river Cerrist at its conflux with the Dovey. It has only one long street, and the houses are low and meanly built of mud and thatched with rushes. One of its chief buildings is the "Plas," or mansion,—or, in other words, the manor-house of the lordship,—which, I was told, belonged from an early period to the Myttons of Halston, but has more recently passed into other hands. The approach to Dinas Mowddy, from Mallwyd, is rendered more striking by the sudden appearance of the town at the junction of three valleys, each of which is enclosed by majestic hills. Its great charm, indeed, is the novel and romantic character of the surrounding scenery. This large estate, the manorial rights of which extend over thirty thousand acres, was possessed for several centuries by

the Mytton family. Many years ago a lead mine was worked upon the mountain called Craig Gwyn, but soon abandoned on account of the water filling up the workings, which, for want of proper machinery could not be removed. At the foot of Craig Gwyn, and extending upwards, is one of the largest slate deposits in the kingdom, denominated primitive clay roofing slate. In various parts metallic veins have been discovered; giving some hopes, therefore, that the poor insignificant town of Dinas Mowddy may, in a few years, become the centre of a new mining district. The *Municipal Commissioners* report the important fact, that there are, at Dinas Mowddy, "stocks, and a crib or little prison, which are scarcely used;" and they characterise the municipal institutions as "*trifling* and *harmless*."

That facetious member of the Antiquarian Society, Mr. William Hutton, visited this neighbourhood nearly half a century ago, and published the following remarks:—'The situation of Dinas Mowddy is romantic, singular, and beautiful, upon a small flat made by nature and improved by art, on the declivity of a mountain prodigiously elevated, on the left descending to the town, and on the right, continuing the same steep down to the river Dovey, which washes its foot. The road winds round the hill in the shape of a bow, and the houses take the same curve. Curiosity led me to count the houses, which were forty-five. One of these, by far the best, is worth, at a fair rent, perhaps fifty shillings per annum. In most of the houses I perceived the inhabitants could not injure themselves by falling down stairs. Although in England I appeared like other men, yet at Dinas Mowddy I stood single. The people viewed me as a phenomenon, with countenances mixed with fear and enquiry. Perhaps they took me for an inspector of taxes; they could not take me for a window-peeper, for there was scarcely any to peep at, and the few I saw were in that shattered state which proved there



was no glazier in the place. Many houses were totally without glass. Ambition here seems wholly excluded. The dress of the inhabitants changes not; it is made for use, not show. That of the softer sex, I was told, is a flannel shift. I did not see the smallest degree of smartness in the apparel even of the younger females. One of the curiosities I saw was a goat feeding, much at ease, upon the ridge of a house. Perhaps the people within did not fare much better than the goat without. Returning, well pleased with my visit, I remarked to my landlord, at Mallwyd, a civil, intelligent man, that I could not conceive the whole property of the united inhabitants of this celebrated town exceeded six hundred pounds. 'I can tell you to a trifle,' said he, 'for I know every one of them well.' After a short pause, he replied, 'It does not exceed two hundred and forty pounds!' If care be the concomitant of wealth, these people must be happy; and their circumscribed style of existence seems to declare it. I saw neither a beggar nor a person in rags."

Romance has never invented wilder scenes than have actually taken place in this now peaceful and almost solitary spot of earth. When the wars of the Roses had disorganized the frame of society in Britain, multitudes of felons and outlaws congregated in this part of the country, and, under the captainship of a desperate leader, assumed the title of the Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy,—the red-headed banditti of Mawddwy. For a length of time they defied the civil power, and continued to plunder and lay waste the country in open day, driving away the cattle from one province to another, and exacting a sort of Black Mail in this region of hills, and along the pastoral plain of the Dovey, somewhat after the manner of the Rob Roys of the Scottish Highlands. At last a commission was granted to John Wynne, of Gwydir, and Baron Owen, of the Welsh Exchequer, to raise a force, and put down these marauders. On Christmas Eve they made a

well-planned and desperate attack upon their retreats, and succeeded in defeating them, and taking about eighty of the outlaws prisoners. Amongst these were two young men, whose mother, with a woman's earnestness, applied to the baron for the pardon of one of them, a cherished one, and the youngest. This request was denied, when the unfortunate parent, baring her neck with desperate fury, exclaimed, "These yellow breasts have given suck to those who shall wash their hands in your red blood." The opportunity was watched for putting this dreadful threat into execution, and when the baron was passing from the Great Sessions, he was waylaid in the thick woods of Dugoed Mawddwy, at a place, now called from the event, Llidiart y Barwn,—the Gate of the Baron,—where several trees had been cut down, and placed abatis-ways to impede his progress. The banditti started from their concealment, and discharged a shower of arrows at the unfortunate party, one of which penetrated the cheek of the baron, and, in the midst of the consternation produced by this attack, they fell upon the miserable remnant that remained firm, with bills and javelins, and, marking out the object of their threat, brought him to the ground almost hewn to pieces. After this tragical scene, more vigorous measures were taken, and this formidable body of robbers was either expelled or extirpated. Many a cruel deed, and single-handed match of daring valour is attributed to this reckless leader of the Gwylliaid, till his name became the terror of the district, and passed into one of those household words mysteriously used by mothers, to frighten their wayward children into obedience.*

* It is the fate of heroes, as well as robbers, to become the bugbears of society. "The name of Richard, King of England, which had filled the world with admiration, was used in the East, long after the time of the Crusades, to terrify refractory brats. It was a customary thing, also, for horsemen to say to their startled animals, "You jades, do you see King Richard in that bush." —*Clark's Vestigia Anglicana.*

"His joy was in the foray—in the fight—
The nightly rescue and the plunder'd hall;
To drive the lowing cattle from the stall,
And fire the hostile roof 'mid dreary night;
His was a lawless life, that holds in thrall
All that we deem of conscience, or of right;
That rushes down the stream of passion's course,
And sinks within the whirlpool of remorse."

An old proverb of this place refers to the views of the inhabitants on the dismal state of society at this period.

"In Mawddwy black three things remain,
False men, blue earth, and ceaseless rain,
Of these they'd gladly riddance gain."

It may not be amiss, while passing through this district of hills and streams, to say a few words on the mountains and rivers of Merioneth. The county is almost covered with immense chains of primitive rocks, many being of considerable altitude, though none are so high as those of Carnarvon. The longest range commences near Corwen, and runs south-westerly to the coast. It contains the Berwyn hills, which are followed by the Arans, and continued by Cader Idris—the principal summits being Cader Ferwyn, seven miles from Corwen, 2563 feet; Aran Fowddy, near the source of the Wnion, six miles south of Bala lake, 2955 feet; and Pen y Gader, the summit of Cader Idris, near Dolgelley, 2914 feet in height. A few miles north-westerly of Bala, a large group of mountains rises, of which Arenig is the highest, being 2809 feet above the sea. Hills also cover the whole extent of the westerly part of the county; among the highest summits may be named Moelwyn, near Ffestiniog, 2390 feet; Rhinog Fawr, near Harlech, 2345 feet; and Tan y rallt, near Llanelltyd, 2200 feet high.

Of rivers Merioneth boasts the Dee; the Maw, or Mawddach; and the Dyfi, or Dovey. The Dee flows from Bala

lake,* and runs past Corwen and Llangollen to Chester, beyond which city it enters the sea; it receives many streams, the principal of which are the Treweryn and the Alwen. The Mawddach rises near Trawsfynydd, and, running southward, a great number of mountain torrents and the river Wnion become its tributaries, till it joins the ocean at Barmouth. The Dovey has its source on Aran Fowddy; it flows past Dinas Mowddy and Machynlleth, beyond which it mingles its waters with those of Cardigan Bay. The largest lakes are Tal y Llyn and Bala.

The road from Dinas Mowddy presents a continued series of varied scenery, at one time rude and majestic, at another picturesque and lovely. It continues along the valley of the Dovey, on an uninterrupted ascent, for four or five miles, soon after which the high ground is reached called Bwlch y Groes, from whence is a descent through the narrow valley of the Twrch to Bala Lake. Pennant designates the pass of Bwlch y Groes as "one of the most terrible in North Wales;" since his time, however, the road has been much improved. On looking westerly, the high peaks of Aran Mowddy and Aran Benllyn are seen rising among this region of hills. On reaching the level ground, the road is continued along the south shore of the lake to Bala.

The town of Bala has only one street of importance, the houses of which are low and of mean appearance, built near the north corner of the lake. It has considerable trade in the manufacture of flannels, stockings, woollen *comfortables*, and Welsh wigs, and has five fairs annually. Near the town

* It is sometimes stated that the Dee rises four miles easterly of the lake through which it flows. But this appears very absurd when it is known that several streams swell the waters of Pemble Meer; the longest rivers entering it are the Twrch and Lliw, which unite at the eastern end, and the Llafar which runs from the northward.



is an artificial mount, called Tommen y Bala, of Roman construction, to which the natives resort, during fine weather in summer, for the purpose of knitting, and enjoying the delightful scenery around.

Bala and its fine expansive lake (called by the natives Llyn Tegid) have their own peculiar attractions. To appreciate them as they deserve, the traveller should first ascend the craggy summit of the neighbouring mountain, and gaze upon the rude glens beyond, through which the boisterous Twrch rushes in a succession of resounding falls. It is by contrasting the wilder and fiercer tracts of the landscape with its milder features round the quiet hamlet and lake, that we add fresh zest to the interchange of feelings ever open to the Cambrian traveller. Bala Lake is the most extensive in Wales, being nearly four miles in length, and three quarters of one in breadth, its banks consequently embracing a circuit of about nine miles. Its greatest depth is forty feet; and the water is said to be so pure, that the nicest chemical tests can detect scarcely any foreign admixture.

Be that as it may, the lake has abundance of pike, perch, trout, eels, and roach, with shoals of a fish called gwyniad, so named from the extreme whiteness of its scales. It is a gregarious fish, often found in the Alpine lakes, more especially those of Switzerland, and dies soon after it is taken. Its weight rarely exceeds four pounds, and its flavour is by many persons considered rather insipid; a circumstance that by no means recommends the gallantry of Lord Lyttelton, when he assures his friends that it is so exquisitely delicate as to more than rival in flavour the lips of the fair maids of Bala themselves.* But, being so very good, and,

* It is a matter of no small wonderment what opportunity the gallant Lord could have had of instituting such a comparison, when he writes in another part of his letter to Archibald Bowyer: -" But what Bala is famous for is the

like the ladies of Bala, perhaps, sensible of their attractions, these fish have the shrewdness to keep out of harm's way, as we are told, by remaining at the bottom of the water, where they feed on small shells and aquatic plants, from which scarcely any bait will induce them to emerge; they are, therefore, principally taken by nets. The angler may always be certain that while a cloud rests on Aran, he may save himself the trouble of fishing in the lake. In former times the fishery is stated to have formed part of the possessions attached to Basingwerk Abbey, but it has since fallen into the hands of Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, who has pitched his tent, in the shape of a neat sporting box, quite according to the Irish rule, "convanient to the spot."

Though now so calm and beautiful,—reflecting all the quiet and clearness of the heavens upon its breast, as the swallow skimmed its glassy surface, and the wild-fowl sought their home in its little bays and creeks,—the aspect of Bala Lake, when the storm is up, and "the winter wild" puts on his terrors, can assume a very different kind of beauty. To see it when the autumnal winds ruffle its broad expanse with billows, or the clouds discharge their contents as fiercely as the torrents from the hills,—when the drifting rack and snow-storm mingle the last leaves of the year with the scattered beauty of the meads and gardens, the observer can no longer recognise the least resemblance in the characteristics of the two landscapes—the Bala of the opposite seasons.

Upon the north-east side, the water sometimes rises many feet above its usual level. When the winds and the rains, as I was informed, "meet and combine the whole of their

beauty of its women—and, indeed, I saw there one of the prettiest girls I ever beheld; but such is my virtue, that I have kissed none since I came into Wales, except an old maiden lady, a sister of Mr. Brynker, at whose house I now lodge, and who is the ugliest woman of her quality in Great Britain; but I know a duchess or two I should be still more afraid of kissing than her."

forces," it is a grand sight to see the lake overshoot its banks, and rush beyond into the valley of old Edeirnion. Once, in the month of June, 1781, a part of the vicinity is believed to have been inundated by one of those singular occurrences, the bursting of an overcharged cloud, called a water-spout, which, however frequently beheld at sea, seldom visits the land. It was attended by terrific lightning and continuous rain, which caused the Twrch—fed by torrents from the Bwlch y Groes hills—to overflow and sweep every thing before it. The spoils of fields and villages, and even human life, marked the progress of the flood; and as far as Corwen the rising of the rivers suddenly burst on the ear of the affrighted people. The scene round Bala is recorded by the old inhabitants as heart-rending and terrific. The deep and dismal chasm, spanned by the one-arched bridge, through which the stream of the Llyn pours its flood down the wildest rocky falls, exhibited a magnificent sight, swelled by the mountain rains into one immense volume of foaming cataract, which again bursting from its black and caverned bed through the wooded glens beyond, rolled its unusual masses of burdened torrents to join the waters of the Twrch. Along the course of the Dee, huge branches, and some of the large forest trees themselves, which threw a gloomier shadow over the dismal scene, were uprooted by the maddening storm and launched into the yawning floods. The lake rose with the impulse of the tempest till it assumed the aspect of a wild and restless sea, keeping stern music with the crashing of the neighbouring woods and the whistling of the blast, while, drowning the roar of the torrents, the thunder, ever and anon, startled the ear, and occasional flashes illuminating the sky exhibited for a moment the lurid and dreadful scene to view.

Quitting Bala, and its expansive lake and prospects, differing so much from all other Cambrian llyns and glens, I proceeded by the side of the river Dee, along the road leading

to Corwen,* till I reached the village of Llandrillo. Four miles from Bala, the river is crossed by Pont Llandderfell, the village being a short distance northward. The church of this place, according to the old Chronicle, had the honour of containing a large image of Derfel Gadern, its patron saint, and the Welsh prophecy ran, that this wooden likeness would some day make a whole forest blaze. However, on the execution of Doctor Forest for treason, and denying the king's supremacy, in 1538, it was taken from its nook, removed to London, and put under the unhappy friar, to add to the flames by which he was burned at Smithfield.† To the stake on which he suffered was affixed the following elegy:—

David Darfel Gatheren,
As sayth the Welshmen,
  Fetched outlaws out of hell:
Now is he come, with spere and shield,
In harnes, to burn in Smithfield,
  For in Wales he may not dwell
And Forest, the fryar,
That obstinate lyar,
  That wilfully shall be dead,
In his contumacie,
The gospel dothe deny,
  And the kinge to be supreme head.

Halle's Chronicle, ccxxxiii.

Those quiet way-side hamlets, upon which the traveller unexpectedly comes, sometimes after a weary walk of almost unbroken solitude, possess an indescribable charm, and especially in the Principality. LLANDRILLO is one of these little refreshing spots of earth; it stands on the eastern banks

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* Of which an account will be found in this volume.

† On his arraignment, Forest replied to the court, in answer to the proof of perjury against him, for having taken the oath:—"I took the oath with my *outward* man, but my *inward* man never consented to it."—*Holinshed*, vol. ii. 945.

of the Dee, in "the matchless vale of Edeirnion," as Mr. Pennant calls it, near the torrent Ceidio, and rises at the very mouth of the romantic glen of Bwlch Cwm. The river rolls its restless onward course to the north; and on the south, at the extremity of the glen, the bulky range of the Berwyn closes up the scene. This is the old road to Corwen, which Mr. Bingley describes as being in his time "almost impassable." It is about thirteen miles and a half in length; but there is one of more recent formation, which is little more than eleven. The old road, however, has so many beautiful scenes to attract the eye of the traveller, that he will find himself amply repaid for the increased distance, as he bends and winds with the course of the murmuring Dee flowing through the luxuriant vale of Edeirnion. Few excursions surpass the pleasant walk along this valley, which comprehends or connects every feature of grandeur, beauty, and interest that can distinguish the face of Nature, and where every thing is found that can impart a charm to pastoral scenery,—the dense wood, the bright river, the wild gloomy rocks in the distance, partially covered with purple heath and thyme, with a profusion of rich materials, blended and disposed into a series of ever-varying and exquisite prospects.

From Llandrillo I passed by a foot-path over the mountains immediately between Cader Fronwen and Cader Ferwyn, two eminences in the range of the great Berwyn hills.* Turning thence to the right, on reaching the summit of these alpine heights, a short walk of two miles brought me within view of the grand waterfall called Pistyll Rhaiadr, at least two hundred feet in height; and though destitute of the luxuriant foliage which decorates and harmonizes some other

* These would seem to be mere variations of the same generic name, bestowed, probably, by the popular taste for the sake of euphony, of which we may perceive numerous examples in the rural nomenclature of the Principality.

cataracts—it possesses an irresistible charm in the stern simplicity of its descent down the flat face of a bleak, naked, barren rock, raging through a granite arch, and gathering its boiling waters into the stony hollow at its foot. It is formed by the little river Rhaiadr, which, after the boisterous raging of the falls, quietly murmurs through a sylvan dell, and, dividing the counties of Denbigh and Montgomery, soon unites with the river Tanat. Near the waterfall is a pleasant little inn, built by the late Sir W. W. Wynne. A farther walk of four miles, through the bold valley of Mochnant, presents to the eye the picturesque village of Llanrhaiadr yn Mochnant, encompassed by mountains of varied form and colour, blending well with the character of the scene.

The parish in which this little village is situated has been long noted for its vicars, among whom was the learned Dr. Morgan—already mentioned—the translator of the bible into his native tongue, and successively Bishop of Llandaff and of St. Asaph; and the no less erudite and more facetious Dr. South. Not having space for the purpose here, I must be content to refer my readers to the biography of this learned divine for some interesting anecdotes—not a few of them, also, very amusing—which will amply repay the perusal.

Montgomeryshire does not present to the wanderer the attractions of Merioneth and Carnarvon. The mountainous portion is an extensive tract, including the southern part of the Berwyn range from Bwlch y Groes to Cader Ferwyn,—the chain of hills which extends along the Dovey from Bwlch y Groes southward to Plinlimmon—and the Kerry hills extending towards Bishop's Castle. The most important river is the Severn, which rises on Plinlimmon. At Llanidloes it receives the Clywedog, and afterwards passes the towns of Newtown and Welshpool, beyond which, near the border of the county, it is joined by the Vyrnwy, a little below which this important river leaves the Principality, after a course of

fifty miles, and enters Shropshire. The southern part of the county is watered by the Wye, which also rises on Plinlimmon, and becomes tributary to the Severn below Chepstow.

About twenty miles from Llanrhaiadr, I approached WELSHPOOL, the most spacious and important of the towns of Montgomeryshire. It has one main street, crossed by small ones at right angles, and the houses are neat and well built. The language spoken, and the manners of the people, are almost altogether English. The church—singularly situated in a hollow of the hill, with a cemetery as high as itself—is built in the pointed, but not ancient style, and dedicated to St. Mary. It is surrounded by a strong wall fifteen feet high, which in the summer months is covered by the choicest flowers of nature. The county-hall, a modern edifice, is erected in the centre of the town, and presents an elegant appearance, having a handsome front, with a colonnade and pilasters of stone. There is every convenience for the administration of justice, and no less for the accommodation of the people. The Severn is navigable for barges to a place called Pool Quay, a mile from the town, and upwards of two hundred miles from its mouth in the Bristol channel. "Betwixt the town and Castell Coch," says old Leland, "is a pretty llyn, or pool, whereof the town takes its name."

Powis Castle, the seat of the Earl of Powis, is situated on an eminence, about a mile south of Welshpool; one of the outer entrances to the park being on the very edge of the town. A considerable portion is built of red stone, from which the natives call it Castell Coch, or the Red Castle. It is an extensive and venerable building, without much pretensions to architectural taste, and has been greatly extended and improved by the present noble owner.

The original building was commenced in 1109, by Cadwgan ap Cynfyn, who was murdered by his nephew, and left the building unfinished. It was continued by Gwenwynwyn,

who was governor of this part of Powis land. Llewelyn ap Jorweth dismantled the castle in 1233. It was again completed, and remained in the possession of Owen ap Gryffydd. On his demise he left a daughter, whose claims were disputed; but, being shortly afterwards married, the king ennobled her husband by the title of Baron Powys; and the estates continued for several centuries in the possession of their descendants. At the time of the civil wars, in the seventeenth century, Percy, Lord Powys, declared for the Royal cause, and garrisoned his castle, of which he took the command in person. He was, however, compelled to surrender to the Parliamentary forces, under General Myddelton, in 1644. On this occasion the walls were greatly damaged by the cannon of the assailants, the place pillaged, and the noble owner himself taken prisoner. The castle and lordship were confiscated to the use of the Parliament; but the proprietor afterwards compounded for and obtained possession of them again.

The magnitude of this elevated pile of building is observed, with the greatest effect, on the road leading towards Montgomery, whence its embattled turrets are seen rising above the magnificent trees by which they are nearly surrounded. I was delighted with my ramble over different parts of the park, which is formed of gently rising hills clothed with wood, and pleasant lawns where the dappled deer added to the charm of the scene. From the upper part, in clear weather, the distant mountains of Plinlimmon, Cader Idris, Aran-Mawddy, and Snowdon, are seen, and their several situations are pointed out by an index suitably placed for that purpose. The principal entrance is a gateway between two massy round towers. In front it is approached through two immense terraces, rising one above the other, by a flight of steps, adorned with statues, vases, and other ornaments.

On the walls and grand staircase are some very fine

paintings, in fresco, by Lanscrome, representing the coronation of Queen Anne, and various mythological and allegorical subjects. The apartments on the ground floor are rather gloomy, from the great thickness of the walls. The views from the windows of the dining and drawing rooms are very fine, presenting the extensive and richly wooded park; the vistas opening at intervals, discovering the valley of the Severn and a wide extent of country, including the Breiddin hills, which are surmounted by three peaks, on one of which is built the obelisk commemorating the victory of Admiral Lord Rodney over the French fleet, in the West Indies, in 1782.

Lord Clive's collection of paintings, particularly portraits, is numerous. Those by Sir Peter Lely are exceedingly beautiful, and in excellent preservation. The most interesting pictures, perhaps, are the portraits of the Duchess of Powis, King Charles the Second, that eccentric genius Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and Henrietta, Queen of Charles the First. There is a full-length portrait of Roger Palmer, Earl of Castlemain, the husband of that intriguing beauty, the Duchess of Cleveland. He is drawn according to the costume of the time, in a black wig and scarlet mantle, and is in the act of dictating to his secretary, when envoy from James the Second to the Pope. The object he had in view, at that time, was to obtain a pardon from his Holiness, for the sin of heresy into which these realms had fallen. The Pope himself could not conceal his ridicule at the absurd attempt to reconcile the two dissevered churches, and he was invariably seized with a fit of coughing when the earl touched upon his embassy. At length, wearied with delay, the earl gave notice to his Holiness that he was about to pack up his credentials and quit Rome; and with equal coolness the representative of St. Peter replied, that in that case he would, with the most cordial affection, recommend him "to

set off early in the morning, and to rest at noon, lest by over excitement, and the effect of the heat, he should chance to endanger his health."

The aspect of the scenery around, like that of the mansion, has more recently partaken of the new and more natural manner of setting off the advantages of nature combined with art. The gardens have been laid out with parallel terraces, and squared slopes, but the fountains and spouting dolphins, with the formal lines of fancifully clipped shrubs, which belonged to it ancient state, have disappeared. For the artist who delights in wild forest scenery, or pastoral quiet, Powis Park will supply a continued treat. The verdant spreading lawns, the swelling hills, and rich variety of sylvan views, together with the distant mountains and woods mingling with the sky, at the moment I contemplated them, in the soft glow of a summer's eve, shed a benign influence over the mind.

It was with singular pleasure that I listened to the commendations—given with earnestness and good will, when no interest was to be derived—of the kind deportment and benevolent disposition uniformly displayed by the proprietor of Powis Castle, and of his sense of justice, his liberality to many in time of need, and the manner in which he steps forward to promote the happiness and improvement of his tenantry.

At a short walk from Welshpool is the beautiful vale of Cyfeiliog, and, at the foot of the Breiddin hills, the ruins* of

* The monks of this abbey had become proud, indolent, and luxurious, at the time when Cynddela Brydydd Mawr was the bard to Madog ap Meredydd, Prince of Powis, and the satirical poet made these vices the subject of some severe animadversions. The good abbot was so offended with the bard, that when he lay on his death bed, one of the order was dispatched to inform him, that his body would not be admitted for burial within the precincts of the abbey. Cynddela wrote some lines in answer to this message, which the Myvyrian Archæsology has versified thus :—

"My soul, ye monks, ye would not save,
Since thus you grudge my corpse a grave."

the Cistercian Monastery, called Ystradd Marchell, founded in 1170. To the north of Welshpool are seen, rising sternly above the valley, Moel y Golfa, Craig Breiddin, and the tri-forked summits of a rock more than one thousand feet in height. On the loftiest peak stands the Rodney Pillar, which has been before mentioned, glittering in sunshine, or swathed in clouds. Here I caught the distant views of the solitary Wrekin, the vast chain of contiguous hills, the summits of Snowdon on the north, and Cader Idris to the west. The vale through which the Severn pursues its course, is beheld extending in peaceful luxuriance far below.

The way to Newtown, through the valley, almost parallel with the river, and studded with pleasant villages, surmounted by richly wooded hills, on one of which rises a little temple,—presents many lovely views. On this occasion, instead of turning to the left when about a mile from Welshpool, and taking the direct road to Montgomery, I proceeded on that towards Newtown as far as the village of Berriew. On my left ran the Severn, and to my right, just above the road, rose a succession of lofty hills, richly clothed with wood; and nearer, the Montgomeryshire canal, which frequently intersects the road, is caught at intervals by the eye, From Berriew again, leaving the road to Newtown, I took the path to the left, and, at a short distance, crossed the bridge over the Severn. It was here, on proceeding a little way, that I observed, on the top of an eminence, on the other side of which lies the town, the picturesque effect of the ruins of the noble castle to which I was approaching. How strange a contrast to the fast-decaying monument of feudal days, and the associations it conjured up, did the whole scene exhibit, in the neat well-conducted inn, the modern roads branching in various directions, and the farm house and yard usurping the old feudal tenure of baronial sway!

No spot in the Principality is more memorable in Cambrian history for the singular events, the wild and daring feats of arms, the fierce contests, and succession of masters, which the Castle of Montgomery witnessed from the very foundation of the fortress to the period of the civil wars. This first strong hold of the Marches was erected by Baldwyn, from whom the place was termed Tre Faldwyn, or Baldwyn's town, a lieutenant of the Conqueror, to overawe the Welsh, though its strength was not unfrequently turned against its original masters. It was again wrested from them by Roger Montgomery, Earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury, who, invading Powis land, took the town and castle, and restoring their fortifications, gave to both the proud name which he bore. Yet, in one short year it fell into the hands of the Welsh, who defied the power of William Rufus, and compelled the Normans to an ignominious retreat. Spite of a brave resistance, the Welsh having levelled the walls, carried the place by storm; and it was not till after four years' incessant struggle that they were again driven to the mountains. The castle was rebuilt by the Earl of Shrewsbury, and a century elapsed ere it again was possessed by the fiery Britons. Subsequently, as at all previous periods, the fertile lands of Powis were esteemed too great a prize to be relinquished, and they became the battle-field not only of rival lords, but of princes and kings. Here, as in all great actions, which threw a lustre on his country, the last of the Llewelyns met the banded hosts of England, and reaped that fame in arms, which soon allied him to the Royal House of the Norman Conquerors, and gave a transitory gleam of peace and prosperity to his suffering country. Summoned as a vassal to appear before the court of King Henry III., the Prince replied by laying siege to the town, which he raised only at the approach of the King at the head of an immense army, before which he was compelled to retire after a severe conflict, but which he

again harassed on its return. It was at this time that Henry restored the castle upon a site deemed so impregnable, and with such lines of defence, as would prove an effectual barrier to the future progress of the warlike Prince. Having placed in it a powerful garrison, and given the command to his grand justiciary, Hubert de Burgh, with honours and emoluments from the lordship of the Marches, the King withdrew in the idea that he had chastised the insolence of the lawless Welsh, and fixed a sharp curb on their predatory career. Hardly had the Royal leader reached the borders, watched by his wary foe, before numbers of the Welsh, pouring from their hills in the rear, boldly faced the new-built fortress frowning from its rock-based height, and, eager to achieve some brilliant action, while their Prince observed the retiring foe, they surrounded and summoned it to surrender. Maddened by such an insult from "a wild horde of Welshmen," the blood of De Burgh boiled to revenge it; and sallying forth with the whole of his veteran garrison, by feigning at first to be worsted, he drew the Welsh further into his toils, and turning on his assailants, while another party took them in flank, a desperate and unsparing conflict ensued. But it could not be long doubtful; and so surely had the grand justiciary taken his measures, and relied on their success, that even the ladies of the castle, surrounding the young and beautiful Countess de Burgh, had been, as at a tournament, witnesses of the bold sally with as much pleasure as if at a contested election or a lord-mayor's day in our own times; and they were as eager to adorn the battlements with the heads of the wild men as with the ribands of some favourite candidate at present. The knowledge of being marked by the eyes of beauty sharpened the edge of Norman chivalry, and many a heart beat high, and fair bosoms heaved with love and pride, as the colours conferred on some favourite youth flew foremost in the frightful slaughter of the undisciplined moun-

taineers. Individual valour could no longer meet the shock of the Norman; the rout was terrible, and great numbers of the Welsh were barbarously beheaded. The lovely countess averted her eyes from the sight; nature and humanity triumphed, though she sought to disguise her tears and terror from her less scrupulous companions.

It is recorded, that to retaliate so foul an injury, Llewelyn ap Iorweth collected together numerous forces from various parts of Wales, and encamped on the side of the hill on which the castle is built. De Burgh, being intimidated, privately withdrew; and Llewelyn, gaining possession of the place, put the garrison to the sword, and burnt the fortress. The life of the countess was preserved by the skill and intrepidity of a few trusty knights and retainers, who conducted her safely out of the castle, by a postern gate, the evening before Llewelyn obtained an entrance.

Burning to avenge the destruction of their countrymen, the Welsh rushed into the castle, and commenced an indiscriminate massacre. The sight of hundreds of trunkless heads, strewn on all sides, roused them to the highest pitch of fury, and all the magnificence and beauty of the newly-erected castle became a prey to the flames. Not less indignant than his followers, Llewelyn afterwards levelled its blackened walls with the earth. A series of undecisive contests ensued, till, at length, in the year 1268, a conference was held at the very spot where these events took place, and a peace concluded between Henry and the Welsh, through the interposition of the Pope's legate, and signed in the once more restored and stately Castle of Montgomery. This treaty was ratified by the respective princes in person, and received Pope Clement's sanction. The lands on both sides were restored; and due fealty and homage, with the more solid honour of twenty-five thousand marks, paid to the English king.

In 1345, the castle and manor of Montgomery, then com-

prised in the hundred of Cherbury, were in possession of Roger Mortimer; and after his attainder, though restored to the family, they eventually passed into the Royal House of York, by the marriage of Anne, heiress of the last earl, whence they came into the possession of the Crown. The castle appears subsequently to have been held in stewardship by the ancestors of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury; and it became the principal residence of that family. During the civil wars, it was garrisoned for Charles the First, who appointed Lord Herbert its governor; but, on the approach of the Parliamentary general, he took the opposite side.

The ruins now seen are part of the bold and lordly pile as it then stood, on the extremity of an impending eminence to the north of the town. The fragment of a tower, and some scattered walls, alone attest its former splendour and magnificence. The walls appear to have been of an immense thickness, which must have caused the interior to wear a gloomy appearance. They, however, give us some idea of its formidable strength and insulated grandeur, and demonstrate the false magnificence of the too-much extolled age of chivalry. The castle was defended by four deep fosses, cut out of the solid rock, over which drawbridges appear to have been thrown by way of security. The approach was by four shorter moats, with two entrances to the main work. The view from the summit embraces a large extent of country, the greater part of which, with its serfs and vassals, was at one period under the despotic sway of its lords. At the foot of the hill is traced a small fortification, with a sort of artificial mount raised on one side. This has been conjectured to be the site of its ancient foundation by Baldwin, bearing evident marks of the Norman fashion. Leland, in the sixteenth century, says,—“The soyle of the ground of the towne is on mayne slaty rocke, and especially the parte of the towne hillinge toward the castell, now a late re-edified,

whereby hathe been a parke. Great ruins of the waulle yet apere, and the remains of foure gates, thus called, Kedewen Gate, Chirbury Gate, Arthur's Gace, and Kerry Gate. In the waulle yet remayne broken tourets, of the which the White Tower is the most notable."

The church, an elegant building in the form of a cross, contains an ancient monument to the memory of Richard Herbert, father to the celebrated baron of the same name, and to Magdalen, his wife. Two recumbent figures repose under a magnificent canopy, and in front are seen the effigies of their numerous family.

The town of Montgomery has an air of peculiar neatness and gentility not very usual in the Principality. It is chiefly inhabited by persons of middle rank, or small fortune, some of whom have selected it by way of economy, and some for "learned leisure;" they have every thing which reason and nature can supply, and a succession of lovely and luxuriant scenes around them to charm the sight, with the rich prospect of Salopian woods, and mountains gradually fading into the clouds. I no longer wondered at the enthusiastic eulogies bestowed upon it by different travellers, or that it should have been the favourite retreat of the sometime studious, sometime mad, yet witty in his eccentricities,—"all things by turns, and nothing long,"—of that true essence of nobility,—the Lord of Cherbury. A native of Montgomery, born in 1583, he was one of those geniuses who, like Swift, show no precocious maturity. Far from this, he says of himself that he was puny, and so backward in his speech, that it was feared he would be dumb; but, he adds, that he knew what was said by others, and only refused to speak lest he should talk nonsense. As he became older, however, it seems that he pushed his way in the world with marvellous facility, not merely mastering languages, but physic, music, and every other science for which he took a fancy. When made a Knight of

the Bath, he vowed that he would act up to his oath of knighthood, and permit no injustice to be done; that in case any lady or gentleman had the slightest complaint on the score of injured honour, he would see it well redressed. And he sometimes kept his word, as the thousand strange incidents and situations through which he passed, in his varied life of a soldier, a traveller, statesman, ambassador, adventurer, and recluse, must have offered him numerous occasions of doing to his heart's content. How singular that the very man, who attempted to explode all belief in revelation as gross enthusiasm, should himself be one of the most extraordinary enthusiasts of his own or any time, and should publish a work on Truth, the Latin title of which he caused to be engraven upon his tomb! Lord Herbert "is said to have been the first author who reduced *deism* into a regular system, in which he asserted, and endeavoured to prove, the sufficiency, universality, and absolute perfection of natural religion, without the aid of supernatural or extraordinary communication of the Divine will." Yet this same man, when he had finished his work, "*De Veritate*," is stated to have put up a solemn prayer for a sign from heaven to determine him upon its publication, and that he interpreted a sudden noise as an imprimatur. "There is no stronger characteristic of human nature than its being open to the strangest contradictions: one of Lord Herbert's chief arguments against revealed religion is, the improbability that heaven should reveal its will to only a portion of the earth, which he terms particular religion. How could a man who doubted of partial, believe individual revelation? What vanity to think his work of so much importance to the cause of truth, that it could extort a declaration of the Divine will, which the interests of half mankind could not!"*

* *Lord Oxford's Royal and Noble Authors*, vol. III. page 16.

The old historian, Burton, writes of the inhabitants of Montgomery—"They are a generous and affable people, comely and fair of body, courteous to strangers, and very loyal to the English crown." Nevertheless, that singular old instrument of punishment, called the cucking stool, was anciently in use at this place, and many a British dame, "comely and fair of body" though she might be, was doomed to suffer this mortifying penalty. The occasion and mode of administering it is described by Mr. Bingley after this wise:—"Whenever any woman was found guilty, in the judgment of the free burgesses of the town, of causing strifes, fightings, defamations, or other disturbances of the public peace, she was adjudged to the gogging stool, or cucking stool, there to stand, with her feet naked, and her hair dishevelled, for such a length of time as the burgesses should think proper, as a public warning to all who beheld her. This is the same kind of instrument which was used among the Saxons. It was called by them scealsing, or scolding stool, that is, a chair in which they placed scolding women as public examples; but, in addition to this, if the enormity of the case required it, this people also plunged them over the head in water. The engine in general consisted of a long beam, or rafter, that moved on a fulcrum, and extended towards the centre of a pond: at its end was fixed the stool, or chair, on which the offender was made to sit. It was called by the Welsh, Y Gadair Goch,—the Red Chair."

However the "comely and fair" ladies of Montgomery might have deemed themselves indebted to our gallant ancestors, the Saxons, for this whimsical invention, the brewers and bakers shared no less in their tender consideration; for these lieges were also adjudged to the same punishment for any adulteration of the national beverage, or for taking inordinate toll. There was, indeed, this aggravation in their case, that when they had mounted the tumbrel, or trebucket, as

the cucking stool was formerly called, they were, as Mr. Jacob states in his Law Dictionary, "immerged over head and ears in *(stercore)* stinking water."

The three great rivers belonging to this county,—the Severn, the Wye, and the Rhaiadr,—have been called the "Three Sisters," and have furnished to the natives, by their peculiar attributes, the materials of a tradition, which is this:—"The Three Sisters were to run a race, which should be first married to the Ocean. Severn and Wye, having a great journey to go, chose their way through soft meadows, and kept on at a traveller's pace; whilst Rhaiadr, presuming on her short journey, staid before she went out, and then, to recover her lost time, ran furiously, in a distracted manner, with her mad stream over all opposition." The chronicler must needs have his moral to this fable of the Sisters' race, which he says "is applicable to children of the same parents, but of different dispositions and courses of life, so that their cradles were not so near, but their coffins are as far asunder."

Half a mile from Montgomery is Lymore Lodge, one of the old seats of the Powis family. It is a very old building, chiefly of wood, and was once the residence of the before-mentioned Lord Herbert. It is surrounded by an extensive park, containing some large pools, well stocked with fish, and, also, with wild fowl during the season. From this place there is a picturesque and striking view of the town of Montgomery, calmly reposing on the side of a hill, whose summit towers above and is partly covered with trees. The church and ruins of the castle form prominent objects in the scene.

Near this town is Cefn Digol, a mountain famous in Welsh history, and consecrated by the last contested battle for the liberties of the Principality in the time of the victorious Edward. Madoc, prince of this country, after the death of

Llewelyn at Builth, had been chosen captain by the men of North Wales, and had beaten several detachments of the marchers, and routed the force under Lord Strange. The prince, flushed with the victories he had obtained, was marching to Shrewsbury, when he was met "upon the hills of Cefn Digol," by the English army in great strength. The ground was favourable to the national mode of fighting, and a desperate battle followed. Armed with his light target and javelin, the active Welshman combated hand to hand with the heavy brand and dagger of the sturdy *Saesnach.* From hill side and mountain top the tide of war rolled its bloody streams during that long battle day; but Madoc's army was finally routed, the prince taken prisoner, and the long resisted conquest of Cambria secured by the slaughter of the patriots of Cefn Digol. The page of history,—that stained page,—the green-turfed tumulus, and the Bard's chaunt, are all that remain of these life-and-death struggles, continued through so many generations.

"Warriors I saw who led the fray,
Stern desolation strew'd their way;
Aloft the glittering blades they bore,
Their garments hung with clotted gore,
The furious thrust, the clanging shield,
Confound the long disputed field."

"Rest, ye brave dead, 'midst the hills of your sires,
Oh! who would not slumber when Freedom expires?
Lonely and voiceless your halls must remain,
The children of song may not breathe in the chain."

FINIS.

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